CHAPTER 46
AL-AḤQĀF

(Revealed before Hijra)

General Remarks

This is the seventh and last Sūra of the Hā Mīm group. Like other Sūrās of this group it was revealed at Mecca towards the middle of the Prophet's ministry before Hijra, at a time when opposition to the new Message had become bitter, persistent and organized. Noldeke places the revelation of the Sūra immediately after Chapter 7. It seems to resemble its sister Sūrās of the Hā Mīm group in tone and tenor. The Sūra has 36 verses including Bismillah and takes its title from v. 22.

The preceding Sūra had ended on the solemn declaration that "God is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, His is the Majesty, and He is the Mighty, the Wise." In the present Sūra the claim made in these words is justified. The Qur'ān has been revealed by the Wise and Mighty God. God is Wise in the sense that the Quranic teaching is based on sound and solid foundations, and is supported by reason, common-sense and accumulated human experience; and He is Mighty in the sense that by living up to its ideals and principles the Muslims will gain ascendancy and predominance over their opponents. The Sūra deals primarily with the subjects of prophethood and Divine revelation, with special reference to the revelation of the Qur'ān, and with Unity of God, and life after death, in regard to which fulfilment of prophecies made in the Qur'ān is adduced as an argument.

Subject-Matter

Like its six predecessors of the Hā Mīm group, the Sūra opens with the subject of the Quranic revelation and Divine Unity which constitutes its main theme, and gives the following few arguments in refutation of idolatry:

(a) Only that Being can command and demand of us that we should adore and worship Him Who, besides being our Creator and Sustainer, is Almighty and All-Powerful and can therefore compel obedience to His laws and commandments; but the false gods of idolaters are not only not creators but are themselves created. (b) Idolatry finds no support in any revealed Scripture. (c) Human knowledge, reason, and experience repel it and revolt against it. (d) A deity which cannot, and does not, answer our prayer is of no use, and the so-called gods of idolaters not only are incapable of responding to the prayers of their votaries, they are even unconscious of having been called upon by them.

The Sūra then proceeds to say that by laying claim to prophethood the Holy Prophet has not brought forward any innovation. Divine Messengers have been appearing at all times and among
all peoples to teach them Unity of God and their duty to their fellow-beings, and the revelation vouchsafed to the Holy Prophet contains the essentials of all those revealed teachings. The Sūra further says that the truth of the Quranic revelation is supported not only by the intrinsic worth of its teaching but also by the prophecies which Moses, the greatest Israelite Prophet, centuries ago, had made about it.

The Sūra then dismisses as foolish and unfounded the disbelievers’ plea which, in their conceit and ignorance, they put forward as an excuse for rejecting the Divine Revelation, viz., “If there had been any good in the revelation presented to us, we, being better informed and better placed in life, would have been the first to accept it.” The Sūra further says that whereas disbelievers, proud of their great material resources and social status, reject the Divine Message, others who are endowed with faith and spiritual wealth, accept it, and stick to it under the severest trials and tribulations, till they are comforted with the Divine assurance, viz., “no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve. These are the fortunate ones from whom God shall accept their good works and overlook their ill deeds.”

The Sūra then cites the fate of ‘Ād — a people who had flourished in the neighbourhood of the Meccans—to show that disbelief never prospers and is sure to come to grief in the long run. The Adites were so completely destroyed that not a vestige of their great and glorious civilization remained behind.

Towards its end the Sūra sounds a note of warning to the people of the Holy Prophet. They are told that they should not be misled by their wealth and prosperity and by the poverty and weakness of Muslims, and that if they persisted in rejecting the Divine Message, their present prosperity itself would prove to be their ruin, because rejection of Truth never goes unpunished.

The Sūra ends with an exhortation to the Holy Prophet and his followers, calling upon them, as brave votaries of Truth, to bear with patience and fortitude, all the suffering and persecution to which they were being subjected, as the time was fast approaching when the cause of Truth would triumph and their persecutors would stand before them in utter disgrace and humiliation, begging for forgiveness and mercy.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious the Merciful."  

2. ˹Hã Mim."  

3. "The revelation of this Book is from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise."  

4. "We have not created the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, but with truth, and for an appointed term; but those who disbelieve turn away from that of which they have been warned."  

---

3757. Commentary:  
See 1:1.  

3758. Commentary:  
For general treatment of abbreviated letters see 2:2 & 19:2. Verses 40:2, 42:2 & 45:2, however, deal particularly with the letters ˹Hã Mim., which, as in the preceding six Chapters, are placed at the beginning of the present Sûra. These letters may be taken as standing for one of the following pairs of Divine attributes, i.e., حم (Praiseworthy, and Lord of honour), حی (Living, Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining), 뉭 (Guardian of the Book and Revealer of the Book). These Divine attributes, as also others that are represented by these abbreviated letters, have a strong bearing on the subject-matter of the Sûra. Unity of God, refutation and denunciation of idolatry, Divine revelation, with special reference to the revelation of the Qur'ân, life after death and the triumph of truth over falsehood are some of the important topics dealt with in the seven Sûras of theğ group, as Divine attributes represented by these abbreviated letters indicate.  

3759. Commentary:  
The verse signifies that the Message of this Book—the Qur'ân—is bound to succeed as it has been revealed by God Who is Mighty. And because its Revealer is the Wise God, it contains the quintessence of the accumulated wisdom of saints and seers of the past ages and is also the compendium of the imperishable teachings of all revealed Scriptures.  

3760. Commentary:  
The verse means to say that the creation of heavens and earth is intended to serve an eternal purpose which is to serve man who is, God's noblest handiwork, and the aim and object of whose life is to develop in himself Divine attributes. For the attainment by man of this grand and sublime object, God raised His Messengers in all times and among all peoples.
5. Say, "Do you know what it is you call on besides Allah? Show me what they have created of the earth. Or have they a share in the creation of the heavens? Bring me a Book revealed before this or some vestige of knowledge in your support, if you indeed speak the truth."\(^{3761}\)

6. And who is in greater error than those who, instead of Allah, pray unto such as will not answer them till the Day of Resurrection, and are even unaware of their prayer?\(^{3762}\)

---

To these Messengers He revealed Himself, and to them He gave His teaching. The greatest and noblest of these Divine Messengers was the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and the last and most complete and perfect code of Divine Laws is the Qur’an.

The creation of the heavens and the earth also establishes the eternal truth that there is only One Designer, Creator and Controller of the universe. It constitutes an unassailable argument against idolatry.

The words “for an appointed time” signify that the universe had a beginning and will also have an end. It is to this great truth that the verses, “All that is on it will pass away. And there will remain only the Person of thy Lord, Master of Glory and Honour” (55:27-28), refer.

3761. Important Words:

أثر (vestige) is inf. noun from أثر and means, a remain or relic of a thing; a trace; sign or mark; vestige or track; a footprint; impression or mark made by the foot of a man upon the ground (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

With this verse begins a systematic refutation and condemnation of شرك i.e. idolatry.

It means to say that only that Being can command adoration and is fit to be worshipped Who as the Architect and Creator of the universe controls our destinies. But the false gods of idolaters not only have not created anything but are themselves created. They do not even possess any power to harm or benefit themselves, nor have they any power over death, life or Resurrection (25:4). Then what title or right have they to man’s worship of them? The verse further says that in reality no authority except that of a revealed Scripture can form the basis for determining whether a certain belief is right or wrong. The words “Or some vestige of knowledge in your support” signify that human science and reason as well lend no support to idolatrous beliefs or practices. Thus this little verse embodies three very strong and cogent arguments to repudiate and demolish polytheistic and idolatrous doctrines.

3762. Commentary:

The verse embodies yet another very convincing argument against idol-worship. Islam presents a Living God Who listens to the prayers of His devotees and has given proof of this fact in every age. He reveals Himself to
7. "And when mankind are gathered together, they (false deities) will be enemies to them (their worshippers) and will deny their worship."^3763

8. "And when Our clear Signs are recited unto them, those who disbelieve say of the truth when it comes to them, 'This is manifest sorcery.'"

9. Do they say, 'He has forged it'? Say, 'If I have forged it, you cannot avail me aught against Allah. He knows best what idle talk you indulge in. Sufficient is He for a Witness between me and you. And He is the Most Forgiving, the Merciful'.^3764

His true votaries by accepting their prayers and consoles them in hour of distress by speaking to them words of comfort. How encouraging and hope-raising are the Quranic words: "And when My servants ask thee about Me, say, I am near. I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he prays to Me" (2:187). Other religions hold out no such promise to their followers. Let them cry hoarse, the Qur'an says, their false gods will never answer their prayer because they do not possess any real power. Of what use, then, is that deity which is deaf and dumb and hears and answers not the agonised cries of its votaries?

3763. **Commentary:**

In this verse the votaries of false gods are told that not only will their gods not answer their prayers unto the Day of Resurrection, but will disown them on that awful Day when they (the idolaters) will be made to face the consequences of their idolatrous beliefs and practices.

3764. **Commentary:**

After effectively refuting idolatry (شرك) in the preceding few verses, the Sūra, in the present verse, proceeds to deal with the next important topic—Divine revelation. It purports to say that forging lies about God, being a fatal poison, is bound to bring about the spiritual death and destruction of the forger. This is the significance of the words: "You cannot avail me aught against Allah." The words, "Sufficient is He for a witness between me and you," signify that "if I am a forger of lies against God, He would not let me go unpunished, but if you reject the Message of truth, you too will have to suffer the evil consequences of your rejection."

The expression من الله means: (a) in opposition to Allah; (b) from the punishment of Allah.
10. Say, 'I am not a novelty among the Messengers, nor do I know what will be done with me or with you in this life. "I do but follow what is revealed to me; and I am but a plain Warner.'

11. Say, 'Tell me, if this is from Allah and you disbelieve therein, and a witness from among the Children of Israel bears witness to the advent of one like him, and he believed, but you are too proud to believe, how should you fare?' Verily, Allah guides not the wrong-doing people.  

3765. Important Words:

بدع (new) is derived from بدع which means, he originated a thing or brought it into existence for the first time, the thing not having existed before, and not after the similitude of anything pre-existing. They say فلان بدع في هذا الأمر i.e., such a one is the first person to do this thing. بدع means, first; new; a first doer of a thing; novel; a thing existing for the first time; an innovator (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2 : 118.

Commentary:
The Holy Prophet is here enjoined to tell his people that his being raised as a Divine Messenger was not a new thing. He was no innovator. They were already conversant with the phenomenon of prophethood. God had been raising His Messengers during the ages when people forsook the path of righteousness. He had raised Prophets in their neighbourhood, and, now, He had selected them for the bestowal of this great gift. They should, therefore, judge the Holy Prophet by the criteria by which the former Prophets were judged. The Holy Prophet is further asked to tell them that though there was no doubt that ultimately his cause would triumph, he was not vouchsafed the knowledge of the vicissitudes of circumstances through which he himself would have to pass during the intervening period, nor did he know how God would treat his opponents. His mission was confined to delivering the Divine Message to them and to warn them that if they did not behave they would come to grief.

3766. Commentary:
The witness from among the Children of Israel is Moses. It is to his prophecy concerning the advent of the Holy Prophet that reference has been made in this verse. The prophecy is to this effect:

I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and will put My words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which he shall speak in My name, I will require it of him (Deut. 18 : 18-19).
12. And those who disbelieve say of those who believe: "If it were any good, they could not have been ahead of us in attaining it.' And since they have not been guided thereby, they will say, 'This is an old lie.'

13. And before it there was the Book of Moses, a guide and a mercy; and this is a Book in the Arabic language fulfilling previous prophecies, that it may warn those who do wrong; and as glad tidings to those who do good.

The reference in the words 'a witness from among the Children of Israel' could not be, as generally misunderstood, to 'Abdullah bin Sallam, a learned Jew, because 'Abdullah had accepted Islam in Medina while this Sūra was revealed at Mecca.

3767. Commentary:
One of the great impediments that stand in the way of truth being accepted by disbelievers is conceit and arrogance. Since it is the poor people and those not high placed in life and generally not conversant with current material sciences, who first accept the Divine Message, the so-called learned and wealthy people regard it beneath their dignity to associate themselves with the humble and lowly believers. It is to this proud attitude of disbelievers that the verse refers. It depicts conceited and arrogant disbelievers as saying to believers, that if there had been any good in the new Teaching, they (disbelievers), who were better placed in life and possessed better knowledge, could not have been outstripped by the former in accepting it, and that, as it was an old, old lie, they could not accept it.

3768. Commentary:
Verse 11 above referred to the appearance of a Prophet among the Ishmaelites. The present verse refers to Arabia as the scene of the advent of the Prophet who was to be the like of Moses and to the Book (the Qur'an) which was to fulfil the prophecies contained in the Book of Moses and which also was to supersede it. The relevant prophecy is as follows:

The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedan. The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty, they presented with their bread him that fled (Isaiah 21:13-15).

See also 26:198.
14. "Verily, those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah', and then are steadfast—no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve."

15. These are the dwellers of the Garden; they shall abide therein—a recompense for what they did.

16. "And We have enjoined on man to be good to his parents. His mother bears him with pain, and brings him forth with pain, and the bearing of him and his weaning takes thirty months, till, when he attains his full maturity and reaches the age of forty years, he says, 'My Lord, grant me that I may be grateful for Thy favour which Thou hast bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and I may do such good works as may please Thee. And establish righteousness among my progeny for me. I do turn to Thee; and, truly, I am of those who submit to Thee.'"

3769. Commentary:
What fear or grief, even under the severest trial, can possibly disturb the equanimity and mental poise of a true believer, who possesses an invincible faith that Allah, the Creator and Lord of the whole universe, is at his back? It is this certain faith that has caused the Faithful in all ages to lay down their lives smilingly in the cause of Truth. Such believers have been called محسنين (doers of good) in verse 13 above. They abide in the Garden of heavenly bliss and bask in the sun of God's love. See also 41 : 31.

3770. Important Words:
أشد (full maturity) is derived from شد. They say شد الشجٌ i.e. he made the thing hard, firm, compact, strong, or he bound it fast. (ashudd) means, physical and intellectual and also spiritual maturity as gives evidence of rectitude of conduct or course of life; firmness or soundness of judgment produced by experience. (Lane)

Commentary:
The word seems to have been used in the sense of spiritual maturity in the present verse and in 12 : 23; and in the sense of intellectual and physical maturity in 6 : 153 and 18 : 83. Generally, Divine Messengers are invested with their Divine mission at the age of forty. The belief that Jesus was made a Prophet at the age of 33 seems to be an historical anachronism, as recent research into Christian history has proved his birth to have taken place about six years earlier.
17. These are they from whom We accept their good works and overlook their ill deeds. They shall be among the inmates of the Garden, in fulfilment of “the true promise which was made to them.”

18. But the one who says to his parents, ‘Fie on you both; do you threaten me that I shall be brought forth again, when generations have already passed away before me?’ And they both cry unto Allah for help and say to him: ‘Woe unto thee! believe; for the promise of Allah is true.’ But he says, ‘This is nothing but the fables of the ancients.’

than generally understood (Enc. Brit. under “Chronicle”).

Commentary:
In verse 13 above a brief reference has been made to (doers of good). The present verse enjoins a believer to do good (to all his fellow-beings, irrespective of caste, colour or clime, starting, however, with his parents, the mother having secured a special mention, as also in 31:15, because “she bears him with pain, and brings him forth with pain.”

In 31:15, it was stated that the weaning of a child takes two years, but in the verse under comment the combined period of pregnancy and suckling is given as thirty months which leaves six months as the period of gestation, and that seems to be the period during which a pregnant woman feels the burden of pregnancy, the fourth month being the time when she begins to have such a feeling.

3771. Important Words:

3772. Commentary:
In verse 16, reference was made to a class of men who spend their God-given gifts in the service of noble causes in order to win the pleasure of God, and who are anxious that they might be succeeded by a generation who should carry on their noble work. The verse under comment speaks of those unfortunate people who are born of good and righteous parents and are brought up in very healthy environments and yet lead a life of disbelief and sin.
19. These are they against whom the sentence of punishment became due, along with the communities of the Jinn and mankind that had gone before them. Indeed, they were the losers.

20. And for all are degrees of rank according to what they did, and that Allah may fully repay them for their deeds; and they shall not be wronged.3773

21. And on the day when those who disbelieve will be brought before the Fire, it will be said to them, 'You exhausted your good things in the life of the world, and you fully enjoyed them. Now this day you shall be requited with ignominious punishment because you were arrogant in the earth without justification, and because you acted rebelliously.'3774

3773. Commentary:
The verse purports to say that all the works, good or evil, of the two classes of men mentioned in vv. 16 and 18 above, will be properly judged and weighed, and, while being requited, their motives and intentions and all relevant circumstances, will be taken into consideration, as the Divine law of compensation works in this way that whereas the reward of a good deed is many times greater than the deed itself, the punishment of the evil deed is proportionate to the deed committed.

3774. Commentary:
When confronted with the consequences of their evil deeds, the disbelievers will be told on the Day of Reckoning that as they had fully exploited and drained to dregs the material gifts that God had bestowed upon them and had used them not in the service of good causes but to further their own sordid ends, they should be prepared to suffer disgrace and ignominy as a fit requital for their misdeeds.
22. And make mention of “the brother of Ād, when he warned his people among the sand-hills — and Warners there have been before him and after him — saying, ‘Worship none but Allah. I fear for you the punishment of a great day.’”

23. They said, ‘Hast thou come to us to turn us away from our gods? Bring us then that with which thou dost threaten us, if indeed thou art of the truthful.’

24. He said, ‘The knowledge thereof is only with Allah. And I convey to you what I have been sent with, but I see you to be a very ignorant people.’

**Commentary:**

3775. ‘Ād was not the name of one tribe but of a group of tribes. The tribe has been called Ād Iram in the Qur’ān (89 : 8). They were a highly powerful and cultured people and had specialized in architecture. They ruled over rich and fertile territories in Yemen. As a result of their rejection of the Prophet Hūd, and their wicked and immoral deeds, they were destroyed by a violent wind which continued to lash them for seven consecutive days, burying their chief cities under heaps of sand and dust. For detailed notes on ‘Ād see 11 : 51 and 26 : 124.

3776. **Important Words:**

- لاتأكنا (that thou turn us away) is derived from أفك (afaka). أفك means, he changed his or its condition or manner of being; he turned him or it away or back from a thing by lying; he perverted his judgment; he deceived or beguiled him; he lied or said what was untrue (Lane & Aqrab). Almost all these meanings are applicable here.

3777. **Commentary:**

When tauntingly asked by his people, when and how they would be punished for rejecting him, Hūd pleaded ignorance of the time and manner of the Divine punishment. But he warned them at the same time that Divine punishment was sure to overtake them and that if they had some wisdom left with them they should have read the writing on the wall because the rejection of Divine Message never goes unpunished. This is the significance of the words “but I see you to be a very ignorant people.”
25. Then, when they saw it coming towards their valleys as a cloud, they said, 'This is a cloud which will give us rain.' 'Nay, but it is that which you sought to hasten—a wind wherein is a grievous punishment.

26. 'It will destroy everything by the command of its Lord,' and they became such that there was naught to be seen, except their dwellings. Thus do We requite the guilty people.

27. And We had established them in that wherein We have not established you; and We gave them ears and eyes and hearts. But their ears and their eyes and their hearts availed them naught, since they denied the Signs of Allah; and that at which they used to mock encompassed them.

3778. Important Words:

اعرب (cloud) is act. part. from عرض. They say عرض الشبي (i.e., he showed, manifested, presented the thing. عرض means, anything showing its breadth or side, hence appearing; a collection of clouds extending sideways in the horizon or a collection of clouds that come over in the sky unexpectedly or appear like a mountain; a gift appearing from a person (Lane & Aqrab).

Whereas the word ريح (wind) has been used in the Qur'an both in a good and a bad sense, its plural always is used in a good sense.

3779. Commentary:

As mentioned above, the Adites were specially advanced in architecture. They built monuments on high places and erected palatial buildings. They had their summer residences, their factories and mechanical works. But they were so completely destroyed that it seemed that they had never existed and only the ruined remnants of their once lofty and strongly-built dwellings could be seen.

3780. Important Words:

أئذة (hearts) is the plural of نُؤَد which is derived from قَاد. They say قَاد i.e., he or it hit, struck, smote or hurt his قَاد i.e., heart. قاد الطَّمْح in the fire. قُلْب is synonymous with قلبت and قلبي. In the Qur'an, too, both these words have been used synonymously. In 28:11 both the words...
4 28. And We did destroy townships round about you; and We have varied the Signs, that they might turn to Us.\textsuperscript{3781}

29. Why, then, did not those help them whom they had taken for gods beside Allah, seeking His nearness through them? Nay, they were lost to them. That was the result of their lie, and of what they fabricated.\textsuperscript{3782}

have been used together, signifying the heart. It is the context which determines where any of these words is used in the sense of mind or heart. Some authors, however, make a distinction between قلب and قلوب; the latter is said to have a more special signification than the former which is said to be the غشاء or the وراء قلب or the middle or the interior thereof. They say قلوب اذ كاذب and i.e., his mind or intellect or courage fled (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

This verse also shows that the Adites were a very powerful and prosperous people. Their dominions extended over vast areas.

3781. Commentary:

The reference in the words “We did destroy townships round about you” is to the destruction of the once very powerful and prosperous people of ‘Ad and of Tubba’ who held sway over vast territories in the south of Arabia. To the north-west the complete ruin of the Thamud tribe held out a severe warning and on the shores of the Dead Sea were situated the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah which were turned upside down on account of the unnatural vice indulged in by them. The destruction of all these places constituted an eye-opener to the Meccans. If they did not eschew their evil ways and continued to reject the Divine Message, they would meet with no better fate. As the Qur’an, the final Law for all mankind, was revealed at Mecca, the words قرآن may also signify the whole world.

The Qur’an reverts again and again to the fundamental problems of faith, morals and other kindred subjects, and deals with them from different angles and points of view in order to satisfy doubts and misgivings of men of varied attitudes, mental make-up or outlook on life. People of shallow thinking and prejudiced minds may call it a repetition, but in fact it is the right approach to different human problems.

3782. Important Words:

قربان\textsuperscript{(求近) is infinitive noun from قرب. They say قرباً i.e., he was or became near to him or it. قربان (qarraba): he made an offering to God. قربان means, an offering or oblation; a sacrifice; anything by means of which one seeks nearness to God; a near or favourite associate or companion (Lane & Aqrab). The word has been used in the latter sense in 39 : 4.
30. And remember when "We turned towards thee a party of the Jinn who wished to hear the Qur'an and, when they were present at its recitation, they said to one another, 'Be silent, and listen' and, when it was finished, they went back to their people, warning them. 3783

31. They said, 'O our people, we have heard a Book, which has been sent down after Moses, fulfilling that which is before it; it guides to the truth, and to the right path. 3784

32. 'O our people, respond to Allah's Summoner and believe in Him. 'He will forgive you your sins, and protect you from a painful punishment. 3785

Commentary:

The verse contains a very challenging argument against idolatry and drives home to polytheists the futility of their idolatrous beliefs and practices, saying that their false gods can never help them in time of need while the True Almighty God comes to the rescue of His servants when they are in distress and call for His help.

3783. Important Words:

نفر (a party) is derived from نفر (nafara) which means, he ran away at random; he broke loose and went hither and thither; he became separated and returned to a distance. نفر (nafarun) means, a number of men from three to ten or less than ten; a man's people or tribe consisting of his near relations (Lane).

Commentary:

The party of men referred to in the verse were the Jews of Naṣibin or, as some say, from Mauṣal or Nineveh in Iraq. Being apprehensive of the Meccans' opposition they met the Holy Prophet at night and after listening to the Qur'an and to the Holy Prophet's discourse, they became converted to Islam and carried the new Message to their people who also readily accepted it. The next verse leaves no doubt that they were Jews and seemed to be the leaders of their people (Bayān, vol. 8). See also 72 : 2-3 and 72 : 14.

3784. Commentary:

This verse clearly shows that the party of men mentioned in the previous verse were Jews because they spoke of the Qur'an as "the Book which has been sent down after Moses."

3785. Commentary:

This and the next verse contain some basic arguments which establish the truth of the claims of a Divine Reformer. First, people are cleansed of sins and impurities and become a model of virtue and righteousness through the Teaching revealed to him and by his own ennobling example.
33. "And whoso does not respond to Allah's Summoner, he cannot escape Him in the earth, nor can he have any protector beside Him. Such are in manifest error."

34. Have they not seen that Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth and was not wearied by their creation, has the power to give life to the dead? Yea, verily, He has power over all things.

35. And on the day when those who disbelieve will be brought before the Fire, "it will be said to them, 'Is not this the truth?' They will say, 'Aye, by our Lord.' He will say, 'Then taste the punishment, because you disbelieved.'"

3786. Commentary:

Secondly, the Divine Reformer does eventually succeed in his mission as it is God's unalterable decree and law that Truth must prevail and falsehood must come to an evil end. The disbelievers cannot alter this Divine decree, try as they might. The gods which they adore leave them in the lurch when they are confronted with the consequences of their wicked deeds.

3787. Important Words:

لَم يَعِى means, he lacked power, strength or ability for, or was unable to perform or execute, his affair thoroughly. أَعِي means, he was or became disabled or incapacitated; he was or became fatigued, tired, wearied. أَعِي is weakness and fatigue which is the result of doing a thing (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The verse means to say that the process of the creation of new heavens and earth has not ceased. Neither is it an empty and unsubstantiated claim. With the coming of a great Divine Reformer the old order dies and a new one takes its place. This signifies the coming into being of a new heaven and a new earth.
36. Have patience, then, as the Messengers possessed of high resolve had patience; and be in no haste about them. On the day when they see that with which they are threatened, it will appear to them as though they had not tarried save for an hour of a day. This warning has been conveyed; and none but the disobedient people shall be destroyed.  

3787A. Commentary:

In this verse the Holy Prophet is told that with his advent a new heaven and a new earth would be born. The old decrepit order would die and a new and better one would emerge from its ruins. But before that great and glorious day his own mettle and that of his followers would be put to a severe test. They will have to bear, with patience and fortitude, like great Prophets of God, very great hardships and privations, and it is after they will come out of the ordeal triumphantly and unscathed that their cause will prevail. That would be a glorious day for believers; and for the disbelievers a time of heart-burning and gnashing of teeth. So severe and swift and overwhelming would be God's punishment that compared to it a whole life spent in comfort and ease would seem but an "hour."
Chapter 47
Muḥammad

(Revealed after Hijra)

Title, Date of Revelation, and Context

The Sūra takes its title from its third verse. It is also known as جَالِسَةَ (war) because it devotes a large portion of its text to the subject of war—its causes, ethics and consequences. The fact that the Sūra deals mainly with the fighting which took place after the Holy Prophet had emigrated to Medina and that it makes repeated mention of the Hypocrites with whom the Muslims came in contact at that place, lends powerful support to the view held by Baṣran, Zamakhshārī, Sayyī, and others that the Sūra was revealed after the Hijra—a large part of it having been revealed probably before the Battle of Badr, in the early days of the life at Medina.

Towards the end of the previous Sūra it was unambiguously and emphatically stated that opposition to the Divine Message, however powerful, organized, and persistent, can never succeed and that Truth must prevail. The subject assumes a certain definiteness in this Sūra, and disbelievers are told that in conformity with the unalterable Divine Law that Truth must ultimately triumph over falsehood, the Holy Prophet and his followers, though in a weak state in the beginning and though their cause seemingly hopeless, will, after overcoming all difficulties and impediments, succeed in the long run, their weakness progressively giving place to strength.

Subject-Matter of the Sūra

The Sūra opens with the challenging statement that all the efforts of disbelievers to retard and arrest the progress of Islam will come to naught and the condition of the Prophet’s followers will improve day by day. It then proceeds to say that since disbelievers have drawn the sword against the Prophet they shall perish by the sword. After holding out to Muslims a definite promise of success against their enemies, it briefly lays down important rules of war, as, for instance, prisoners can be taken only after regular fighting in which the enemy is decisively beaten (v. 5), but after the war is over, they are to be set free either as an act of favour, or, after taking proper ransom. Thus the Sūra, in a little verse, strikes effectively at the evil practice of slavery.

It is further stated that falsehood, though in a position of strength and power against Truth in the beginning, eventually must suffer defeat. This is a lesson writ large on the pages of history, and the evil fate of peoples nearer home such as ʿĀd, Thamūd, Midian and the people of Lot should open the eyes of the Meccans. Next, the Sūra says a few words of comfort and good cheer to the Holy Prophet, telling him that though he is being hounded out of his native place, friendless and apparently helpless, to seek refuge in a distant place among alien people, yet this
very fact will lay the foundation of a great future for his Faith and his followers. His opponents seem to be very powerful but "there have been towns, more powerful than the town which has driven thee out," and yet God destroyed them and so will He destroy the enemies of the Prophet. They are satisfied with having driven him out of Mecca and seem to have a false sense of complacency that thereby they have nipped the tender plant of Islam in the bud, but in fact they have laid the foundation of their own ruin if they could but read the writing on the wall.

Next, the Sūra briefly mentions the aims and objects of war according to Islam. Since it requires very sincere and honest adherence to a cause to imperil one's life, honour, or property for it, war, which puts to test one's sincerity or true adherence to a cause, was enjoined upon Muslims in self-defence so that true and sincere believers might be distinguished from the Hypocrites and those weak of faith. Whereas, says the Sūra, the believers welcome a revelation enjoining them to fight in the way of Allah, for it is in fighting that the real mettle of a man is tested, the disbelievers, and the Hypocrites feel as if they are being driven to death. Thus true believers are separated and sifted out from those who are insincere or false in the profession of their faith. The Sūra closes with a further exhortation to Muslims to be prepared to spend whatever they possess for the cause they hold so dear, because to be stingy and niggardly when the cause requires its votaries to spend with both hands, is calculated not only to injure the cause but also the individual himself.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.\textsuperscript{3788}

2. "Those who disbelieve and hinder \textit{men} from the way of Allah—He renders their works vain.\textsuperscript{3789}

3. But \textit{as for} those who believe and do good works and believe in that which has been revealed to Muhammad—and it is the truth from their Lord—He removes from them their sins and sets right their affairs.\textsuperscript{3790}

\textsuperscript{a}See 1:1. \textsuperscript{b}4:168; 16:89. \textsuperscript{c}13:20; 22:55; 34:7.

\textbf{3788. Commentary:}

See 1:1.

\textbf{3789. Commentary:}

Works of disbelievers are rendered vain in that their efforts to arrest the progress of the cause of Truth produce no results. The cause of Truth triumphs and prevails.

\textbf{3790. Important Words:}

- بالهم (their affairs) is substantive noun from بال (bala) which means, it (fat) melted or dissolved. بال means, a state, condition or case (12:51). هو نفي البال means: (1) he is in ample and easy circumstances or condition. (2) A thing or affair to which one devotes his special care. They say أبي هذا من بالي \textit{i.e.}, this is not of the things for which I care. (3) The heart or mind. خطر بالي means, it occurred to me. (4) Attention. An Arab would say أعطني بالك \textit{i.e.}, give me thy attention (Lane & Aqrab).

- الحق (truth) means, an established fact which is undeniable; a right, equity or justice; a thing that is decreed; a thing suitable to the requirements of justice; truth; wisdom; what is binding; obligatory, just, proper; right; genuine, authentic, real; prudence (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradat).

\textbf{Commentary:}

Because belief in the Holy Prophet, as in all Divine Messengers, is included in the words "those who believe and do good works," the expression "and believe in what has been revealed to Muhammad" seems to be redundant. But nothing in the Qur'an is redundant or superfluous. The expression serves a definite purpose. It removes a possible misconception, that belief in God and belief in life after death alone are the two fundamental articles of Faith (2:63). The verse leaves no doubt about the indispensability of belief in the Holy Prophet by saying that what has been revealed to him is حق, \textit{i.e.}, it is the whole truth and nothing but the truth; it agrees with the requirements of justice, truth and wisdom, and fully meets the exigencies and circumstances of time and the varying human needs, and by it moral lapses of those who believe in him are obliterated, their difficulties removed and their condition progressively bettered.
4. That is because those who disbelieve follow falsehood while those who believe follow the truth from their Lord. Thus does Allah set forth for men their similitudes.

5. And when you meet in regular battle those who disbelieve, smite their necks; and, when you have overcome them, bind fast the fetters—then afterwards either release them as a favour or by taking ransom—until the war lays down its burdens. That is the ordinance. And if Allah had so pleased, He could have punished them Himself, but He has willed that He may try some of you by others. And those who are killed in the way of Allah—He will never render their works vain.

3791. Important Words:

أَكَثَّنَوْمُهُمُ (you have overcome them). أَكَثَّنَ (thakhuna) or tha-khana) which means, it was or became thick or coarse. أَكَثَّهُ (he rendered him heavy or languid or enervated; or he overcame him after inflicting many wounds on him. أَكَثَّ فِى الأَرْضِ (he made a great slaughter among the enemy or inflicted heavy wounds upon him. أَكَثَّ مِنْهُ (he caused much slaughter in the land; or he fought vehemently in the land (Lane & Aqrab).

أَتَصَرَّفْنَ (He would have punished them) is derived from نَصَرَ. They say نَصَرَ الله على عدوه i.e., God helped, aided or assisted him against his enemy or made him victorious. أَتَصَرَّفْنَ (he defended himself against his injurer. أَتَصَرَّفْنَ (he exacted his right or due completely from him; he avenged himself upon him; he punished him (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The verse, in a nutshell, lays down some important rules about the ethics of war and its conduct and incidentally deals a death blow to slavery. Briefly these are: (a) When they are engaged in regular battle in the defence of their faith, honour, lives or property, the Muslims are enjoined to fight bravely and relentlessly, giving no quarter, and expecting none from the enemy; and not to flee from the field of battle under lame or weak excuses. They must either win or die. "He who turns his back to the enemy", says the Qur'an, "draws upon himself the wrath of Allah" (8:13-17). (b) When war is once started, it should continue till peace is established and freedom of conscience secured.
6. He will guide them and improve their condition.  

7. And admit them into the Garden which He has made known to them.

(a3 : 196 ; 9 : 111.)

(c). Prisoners are to be taken from the enemy, only after regular and pitched battle has been fought, and the enemy is decidedly and positively beaten. Thus regular war is declared to be the only reason for taking prisoners; for no other cause free men are to be deprived of their liberty. (d). When war is over, prisoners should be released, either as an act of favour, or on taking ransom or by negotiating mutual exchange. They should not be held permanently in captivity or treated as slaves. The Holy Prophet carried this Divine Commandment into actual practice by setting at liberty about a hundred families of Bani Mustaliq and several thousand prisoners of Hawazin after both these tribes had been decisively beaten in battle. It was after the Battle of Badr that ransom was accepted for the prisoners who were set free. This was perhaps, because Islam was then in a very weak state. But, on this occasion too, those of them who could not pay their ransom in money but were literate, were required to teach reading and writing to some of the Muslims. The verse thus has struck very effectively at the roots of slavery, abolishing it completely and for ever. (Muir, Zurqani & Hisham).

The words “And if Allah had so pleased, he could have punished them Himself, but He has willed that He may try some of you by others,” signify that God possessed the power to punish the enemies of Truth without the instrumentality of Muslims but He got the latter engaged in fighting with disbelievers so that on the one hand their own good qualities of character should have an opportunity to come into play and on the other the bad qualities of disbelievers should become exposed. Perhaps in no other aspect of life was the moral superiority of the Companions of the Holy Prophet so clearly demonstrated as in their treatment of their fallen foes.

The words “And those who are killed in the way of Allah—He will never render their works vain,” mean that the sacrifice of Muslims slain in the field of battle would not be wasted. It was their sacrifice that firmly laid the foundation of a bright future for Islam.

3792. Commentary:

Since one of the meanings of هدى is to follow the right path till one reaches one’s destination and achieves the object of one’s quest (Lane), the verse purports to say that the martyred Muslims have achieved, by their death, the object for which they gave their lives which was to attain God’s pleasure and to make Islam secure and strong.

3793. Important Words:

عرف (made known) is transitive verb from عرف (‘arafa) which means, he knew it or became acquainted with it; he knew it by means of one of the senses and also by mental perception. عرفه الامر (‘arafa) means, he acquainted
8. O ye who believe! if you help the cause of Allah, He will help you and will make your steps firm.

9. But as far those who disbelieve, perdition is their lot; and He will make their works vain.\(^{3794}\)

10. That is because they hate what Allah has revealed; so He has made their works futile.\(^{3795}\)

Commentary:

The verse means that the Muslims slain in the way of Allah will be admitted into gardens of Paradise of which they had a foretaste in the present life. They had a foretaste of them in the sense that they enjoyed in their physical form all those spiritual blessings and favours which are mentioned in the Qur'ān as having been promised to them in the next world. Or the verse may signify that Muslims had a spiritual foretaste of "the Garden" because they saw with their own eyes promises, made to them in the Qur'ān about Paradise, being fulfilled in this very life.

3794. Important Words:

\(\text{تامس} (\text{perdition})\) is inf. noun from \(\text{تامس} (\text{ta'\#})\) which means, he stumbled and fell upon his face; he missed his proof in litigation and the object of his search in seeking; he became far-removed; he became degraded. \(\text{تامس} (\text{ta'\#})\) also means, rendering a thing fragrant, and adorning, decorating or embellishing it (Lane).

3795. Commentary:

Three times in the few verses that have gone before is it stated that "God has made the works of disbelievers vain." This signifies that disbelievers had bent all their energies, of mind and body, to the achievement of one supreme desire — to see Islam fail and come to nought. But Islam triumphed. It progressed and prospered and the disbelievers failed to have their desire fulfilled.
11. "Have they not travelled in the earth and seen what was the end of those who were before them? Allah utterly destroyed them, and for the disbelievers there will be the like thereof.\[3796\]

12. That is because Allah is the Protector of those who believe, and as for the disbelievers, there is no protector for them.

13. Verily, Allah will make those who believe and do good works enter the Gardens underneath which rivers flow, while those who disbelieve enjoy themselves and eat even as the cattle eat, and the Fire will be their resort.\[3797\]

14. And how many a township, more powerful than thy town which has driven thee out, have We destroyed, and they had no helper.\[3798\]

\[3796\] Commentary:

As many as fifteen times, the disbelievers of the Holy Prophet have been warned in the Qur'an to travel in the earth and see the dreadful end to which the disbelievers of former Prophets have come. How can they, the verse warns them, expect to escape a similar fate? The expression امّالها shows that Divine punishment will overtake disbelievers in various forms and shapes.

\[3797\] Commentary:

The believers make use of the things of the world and eat and drink as do the disbelievers, but whereas the former eat to live in order to serve God and man, the latter live to eat, drink, and be merry, and have no nobler objects to pursue. They do not rise above the level of animals as their whole concept of life is materialistic.

\[3798\] Commentary:

The verse constitutes a mighty prophecy. According to the majority of scholarly opinion it was revealed while the Holy Prophet was on his way from Mecca to Medina, having been driven
15. Then, "is he who takes his stand upon a clear proof from his Lord like those to whom the evil of their deeds is made to look beautiful and who follow their evil inclinations?"  

16. A description of the Garden promised to the righteous: Therein are rivers of water which corrupts not; and rivers of milk of which the taste changes not; and rivers of wine, a delight to those who drink; and rivers of clarified honey. And in it will they have all kinds of fruit, and forgiveness from their Lord. Can those who enjoy such bliss be like those who abide in the Fire and who are given boiling water to drink so that it tears their bowels?

out of his beloved native place, with a price put on his head. The Prophet was friendless and his cause seemed hopeless. He was hourly in fear of being caught, as Medina was far away and the country-side swarmed with adventurers who sought to bring him dead or alive to get the much-coveted prize. It was at that critical hour that the verse was revealed. It promised a safe journey for the Prophet and the eventual destruction of his enemies.

3799. Commentary:

The preceding verse promised a bright future for Islam and the ultimate destruction of disbelief, at a time when the Prophet's cause seemed quite hopeless. The verse under comment continues the theme and says that the outcome could not possibly be otherwise as the claim of the Holy Prophet was reinforced and substantiated by incontrovertible heavenly Signs while disbelievers had nothing to their credit but wicked deeds and evil desires.

3800. Important Words:

\( \text{ان} \) (rivers) is the plural of \( \text{ن} \) which is inf. noun from \( \text{ن} \) (nahara) which means, it flowed or flowed with force. \( \text{ن} \) means, a river, a brook, a stream. The word also means, amplitude, or light and amplitude (Lane).

\( \text{عسل} \) (honey) is inf. noun from \( \text{عسل} \) (asala). \( \text{عسل} \) means, he prepared the food with honey. They say \( \text{عسل} \) i.e., he made him an object of eulogy; he made him an object of love to men. \( \text{عسل} \) means, honey; flowers or blossoms because honey is made therefrom; a good or righteous deed, the eulogy for which a person is deemed sweet (Lane).

Commentary:

The verse mentions four kinds of favours and blessings promised to believers in this and the
17. And among them are some who listen to thee till, when they go forth from thy presence, they say to those who have been given knowledge, 'What has he been talking about just now?' Those are they whose hearts Allah has sealed, and who follow their own evil inclinations.

next life, i.e., rivers of pure water, rivers of milk of which the taste does not change, rivers of wine which gives delight and rivers of clarified honey. The word which has been used four times in the verse, besides other senses, signifies light and amplitude; and , among other things, means a good or righteous deed which wins for the doer the love and esteem of men. In view of the signification of these two words the verse may mean that the four things mentioned will be given to the righteous in plenty: viz., water which is the source of all life (21:31); milk which, besides giving health and vigour to the body, stands for spiritual knowledge; wine which gives pleasant sensations and forgetfulness of worries; and honey, being the means of curing many a disease, represents good and righteous deeds which make the believers beloved of men. Taken in the physical sense, i.e., pertaining to the present life, the verse would signify that in the present life the believers will have in plenty all those things which make life pleasant, delightful and useful; and taken symbolically and in a spiritual sense, it would mean that believers will have a full life, they will be endowed with spiritual knowledge, will drink the wine of God's love and will do deeds that will win for them love and esteem of men.

3801. Commentary:

As the principal subject of the Sūra is war, it naturally deals with three categories of men, viz., true believers, firm disbelievers and the Hypocrites who vacillate between faith and disbelief. The verse under comment deals with the third category of men.

The expression has a two-fold meaning. A hypocrite being a double-faced person generally uses language susceptible of double meaning. This he does in order to extricate himself from an awkward position, wherein, should one construction of his speech land him in trouble, he might be able to avoid that consequence by putting quite a different construction on it. The above expression is an appropriate instance of the equivocal language used by the Hypocrites of Medina. If one of them, after a meeting with the Prophet, happened to meet a Muslim, he would say "What was it that he said just now," meaning, what beautiful and highly useful things had the Prophet said. But if he chanced to meet a hypocrite like himself he would use the same expression but meaning "what nonsense talk had the Prophet indulged in."
18. But as for those who follow guidance, "He adds to their guidance, and bestows on them righteousness suited to their condition." 3802

19. They wait not but for the Hour, that it should come upon them suddenly. The signs thereof have already come. But of what avail will their admonition be to them when it has actually come upon them. 3803

20. Know, therefore, that there is no God other than Allah, and ask protection for thy frailties, and for believing men and believing women. And Allah knows the place where you move about and the place where you stay. 3804

3802. Commentary: 

The expression آنّا هم تقاوهم may mean: (a) God made them righteous; (b) He disclosed to them the ways and means by employing which they could attain تقاوهم; (c) Allah bestowed upon believers favours and blessings which are the result of a life of righteousness.

3803. Important Words:

شروط (signs) is the plural of شرط. They say شرط عليه بكذا, i.e. he imposed upon him such a condition. شرط نفسه بكذا means, he marked himself for such an affair. شرط means, a sign, token or mark. شرط الناس means, the best or meanest of men (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary: 

Disbelievers are so obstinate in rejecting the Divine Message that they would not listen to any argument but would continue to insist that the threatened punishment should come soon. But, the verse purports to say, the signs of their destruction have already appeared if they but read them. When, however, punishment would actually arrive, their repentance would be of no avail. Why don't they then take heed before it is too late? The reference in the word شرط (signs) seems to be to the Holy Prophet's flight from Mecca which proved to be the prelude to the appearance of many Signs.

3804. Commentary: 

For the meaning and significance of the expression استغفر لذّيكم see a detailed note on 40: 56 & 48: 3. The words متلككم و متاككم may mean, when you move about transacting your affairs and when you take rest, or متلككم may apply to this world and متاككم to the next.
21. And those who believe say, 'Why is not a Sûra revealed?' But when a decisive Sûra is revealed and fighting is mentioned therein, thou seest those in whose hearts is a disease, looking towards thee with the look of one in a death-faint. So ruin seize them!

22. Obedience and "reasonable speech is proper for them. And when the matter is determined upon, it is good for them if they were true to Allah.

23. Would you then, if you are placed in authority, create disorder in the land and sever your ties of kinship?

3805. Important Words:
أولى (ruin) is derived from أولي and means, nearer; more deserving; more competent; more fit. The expression أولي لك is used to give warning, and means mischief or trouble has approached near thee, so be on your guard. The expression also means, woe to thee; woe be thy lot (Aqrab).

Commentary:
The verse means to say that whereas true believers avidly wait for a verse to be revealed which should embody a Divine commandment directing them to fight in the way of Allah, "those in whose heart is a disease," shudder at the very idea of being invited to fight.

3806. Important Words:
صدق في الحديث (were true to Allah). صدق في التبال means, he told or spoke the truth. صدق في التبال means, he fought well; he gave a good account of himself in the fight. صدق القلاء means, he was firm in fight. صدق الصبح means, the dawn shone clearly. صدق في وعده means, he fulfilled, or he was true to his promise with me. The Quranic expression صدقاً ما عادوا الله عليه (33:24) means, they were true to their covenant with Allah and fulfilled it (Lane & Aqrab).

3807. Commentary:
The verse signifies that believers have been allowed to fight because if the power of disbelievers had not been broken, they would have created disorder in the land and would have severed all ties of kinship and trampled under foot all rightful claims. The verse also signifies that if believers refused to fight the disbelievers now, Arabia would continue to suffer from disruption and disintegration, and forces of evil would stalk the land.
24. It is these whom Allah curses so that He makes them deaf and makes their eyes blind.

25. "Will they not, then, ponder over the Qur'an, or is it that on the hearts are their locks?"

26. Surely, those who turn their backs after guidance has become manifest to them, Satan has seduced them, and holds out false hopes to them.

27. That is because they said to those who hate what Allah has revealed, 'We will obey you in some matters,' and Allah knows their secrets.

28. But how will they fare when the angels will cause them to die, smiting their faces and their backs?

---

3808. Commentary:

This verse constitutes an enlargement of the one preceding it. It purports to say that it is because disbelievers do not ponder over the Qur'an and do not try to understand and realise the real purpose of Islamic wars that they lose their spiritual sight and hearing and begin to find fault with the Quranic commandments about war.

3809. Commentary:

The reference in the words, "those who hate what Allah has revealed," is to disbelievers who "never liked that any good should be sent down to the Faithful from their Lord" (2:106). The Hypocrites would not side with disbelievers openly and unreservedly. A hypocrite is too wily a person to burn his boats. He faces both ways. But, says the verse, God would expose their double-facedness. This is the significance of the words "Allah knows their secrets."
29. That is because they followed that which displeased Allah, and disliked the seeking of His pleasure. So he rendered their works vain.

30. Do those in whose hearts is a disease suppose that Allah will not bring to light their malice?  

31. And if We pleased, We could show them to thee so that thou shouldst know them by their marks. And thou shalt surely recognize them by the tone of their speech. And Allah knows your deeds.

32. And We will surely try you until We distinguish those among you who strive for the cause of God and those who are steadfast. And We will make known the facts about you.

3810. Important Words:

(their malice) is the plural of which is inf. noun from (jaghana). It means, he was or became affected with rancour, malice or spite against him. It means, rancour, malice, spite; violent hatred, enmity; desire or yearning or longing of the soul, etc. (Lane & Aqrab).

3811. Important Words:

(tone) is inf. noun from (lahana). They say, he said to him something which he (the latter) understood but which was unintelligible to others; he intimated to him something which he alone understood; he spoke obliquely or ambiguously.

3812. Important Words:

(We distinguish). It means; he knew it; he became acquainted with it. It is syn. with (‘ilm) which is wider and more general in signification than (‘urf and means, he knew it intuitively and inferentially (i.e. تبع). They say, I may

Commentary:

A hypocrite faces both ways. He never talks straight and always indulges in ambiguous and equivocal speech so that it conveys one sense to one person and quite another sense to another person. It is to this crooked manner of speech of the Hypocrites that reference has also been made in 2:105.
33. Those who disbelieve and hinder men from the way of Allah and oppose the Messenger after guidance has become manifest to them, shall not harm Allah in the least; and He will make their works fruitless.

34. O ye who believe! obey Allah and obey the Messenger and let not your works go vain.

35. Verily, those who disbelieve and hinder men from the way of Allah, and then die while they are unbelievers—Allah certainly will not forgive them.

Commentary:

Taking into consideration the root-meanings of the words یا and یا, the verse would signify that God makes believers pass through travails, trials and tribulations and He has enjoined fighting on them that sincere believers may become distinguished from the Hypocrites and that the qualities of head and heart of believers and also the results of their steadfastness and fortitude amidst hardships and privations may have an opportunity to come into actual play.

It may also be noted that knowledge (علوم) is of two kinds: (a) knowledge about a thing before its occurrence; and (b) knowledge about it after it has actually happened. Knowledge referred to in the verse under comment belongs to the latter category.
36. So "be not slack and sue not for peace; for you will certainly have the upper hand. And Allah is with you, and He will not deprive you of the reward of your actions.\textsuperscript{3813}

37. "The life of this world is but a sport and a pastime, and if you believe and be righteous, He will give you your rewards, and will not ask of you your possessions.\textsuperscript{3814}

38. If He ask them of you, and press you, you would be niggardly, and He would bring to light your malice.\textsuperscript{3815}

\textsuperscript{3813} Important Words:

\begin{itemize}
    \item "will not deprive you" (\textit{الن يتمركم}) is derived from \textit{يتمركم} i.e., he made him to suffer loss or detriment in respect of his right; or he deprived him or defrauded him of it partially or wholly (\textit{Aqrab}).
\end{itemize}

\textbf{Commentary :}

As the \textit{Sûra} primarily deals with the subject of war, the Muslims are enjoined here that when once the fighting has started, they are not to sue for peace, whatever form or shape the fortunes of war may take. They are to win either victory or martyrdom. The verse, besides laying this heavy responsibility on Muslims, makes to them an unequivocal promise of victory in the words “You will certainly have the upper hand as Allah is with you.” But whereas, on the one hand, Muslims are not to sue for peace under any circumstances, on the other, they are not to reject overtures of peace made by the enemy even if by doing so he seeks to deceive Muslims or to gain time (8 : 62). Islam is a religion of peace. It has certainly permitted its followers to take up arms in self-defence, or, when refusal to fight means sure destruction. But it has also enjoined them to cease fighting, whatever the circumstances, when an offer of peace is made by the opposite side.

\textsuperscript{3814} Commentary :

The verse purports to say that as Muslims have been enjoined to fight in the cause of God, they will have to bear the expenses of war and for this purpose they will have to make sacrifices of life and money. But God does not need their money. It is for their own benefit that sacrifices of life and money are demanded of them because no success is possible without such sacrifices. True believers must understand and realise this supreme lesson.

\textsuperscript{3815} Commentary :

The verse applies to Hypocrites. Though professing to be Muslims, they will not spend their money in the cause of Islam, however pressing its need might be, because their hearts are full of rancour, malice and spite against it. But whatever they may or may not do, Islam will be victorious and their rancour and malevolence would be exposed.
39. Behold, you are those who are called upon to spend in the way of Allah; but of you there are some who are niggardly. And whoso is niggardly, is niggardly only against his own soul. And Allah is Self-Sufficient, and it is you that are needy. And if you turn your backs, He will bring in your stead a people other than you, then they will not be like you. 3816

3816. Commentary:

The address in this verse is of general application. Miserliness is a deadly moral disease that eats into the vitals of man's moral and spiritual well-being. Elsewhere the Qur'ān has used very strong language about misers or niggardly people (9:35). When the Holy Prophet was once asked as to whom the words, "He will bring instead a people other than you," referred, he is reported to have said, "If Faith were to go up to the Pleiads, a man of Persian descent will bring it back to the earth" (Rūh al-Ma'āni).
CHAPTER 48

AL-FATH

(Revealed after Hijra)

Title, Date of Revelation, and Context

According to consensus of scholarly opinion the Sūra was revealed when, after signing the Treaty of Ḥudaibiya, the Holy Prophet was on his way back to Medina, in the 6th year of Hijra in the month of Dhu’l-Qa’dah (Bukhārī). The Treaty being an epoch-making event, all incidents connected with it have been carefully preserved in Islamic history. So complete agreement exists concerning the date and place of the revelation of this Sūra. The Sūra is entitled Al-Fath (the Victory). The title is appropriate in that a seemingly diplomatic defeat eventually proved to be a master-stroke of strategy and led to the fall of Mecca, and consequently the conquest of the whole of Arabia. The Sūra further, referring by implication to the fall of the Roman and Persian Empires, embodies a prophecy about the eventual triumph of Islam over all the religions of the world.

Towards the close of the preceding Sūra, believers were given definite promise of victory over their opponents. The present Sūra declares in clear and unequivocal terms that the promised victory is not a thing of some indefinite distant future, but is near at hand. It is so near that it may be said to have actually arrived, and it will be so decisive and overwhelming that even the most sceptic will find it hard to deny.

Subject-Matter

The Sūra opens with a firm and unequivocal declaration that the promised victory has actually arrived and that it would be clear, definite, and overwhelming. The Holy Prophet is told that as a result of it people will join the fold of Islam in such large numbers that it would prove a formidable task for him adequately to train and educate the new converts in the tenets and principles of Islam. He should therefore implore God’s assistance in the discharge of his onerous duty, and ask for His forgiveness and mercy lest, due to human limitations, some defects should remain in its full execution.

The Sūra proceeds to say that because of lack of proper realization of the import of the Treaty of Ḥudaibiya the believers were downcast. God would send down solace and tranquillity on them and their faith would increase, while the false satisfaction and delight of disbelievers would be short-lived. The believers are further told that they should not have doubted the wisdom of the Prophet’s action in signing the Treaty since he was God’s Messenger and all his actions were done under His direction and guidance. Their duty was “to believe in him, help him, and honour him”. 2439
Further, the *Sūra* says that believers earned the pleasure of God when they swore allegiance to the Prophet under “the tree” that they would stand by him through thick and thin, even unto death. It was God’s own plan that fighting did not take place because in Mecca there lived true and sincere Muslims whom believers did not know, and some of whom would have unwittingly been killed, though disbelievers also would certainly have suffered a crushing defeat, since it is God’s unalterable law that disbelief should suffer defeat when it is face to face with belief.

Next, the Hypocrites and the laggers-behind receive a severe rebuke and their hypocrisy is exposed. Whenever they are invited to fight in the cause of God, the *Sūra* says, they invent false excuses to justify their tarrying behind, but by their foolish subterfuges they deceive no one but themselves, and their false excuses would not save them from Divine punishment that is in store for them.

Towards the close, the *Sūra* reverts to the subject that not only would the Treaty of Ḥudaybiya prove a great victory but other victories would also follow in its wake, and the neighbouring countries would fall to the victorious arms of Muslims, because it is decreed in heavens that Islam, being the last Divine Message, should prevail over all religions and mankind should worship one God and follow one Prophet.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.\textsuperscript{3816A}

2. Verily, We have granted thee a clear victory,\textsuperscript{3817}

\textsuperscript{3816A} Commentary:
See 1:1.

\textsuperscript{3817} Commentary:

The reference in the words "a clear victory" seems to be to the Treaty of Ḥudaibiya. It is remarkable that though, during the previous brief six years of his life at Medina, the Holy Prophet had gained great victories over his enemies which had crippled and crushed their fighting power, yet none of them is called "a clear victory" in the Qur'ān. It was reserved for the Treaty of Ḥudaibiya to receive this signal honour, in spite of the fact that its terms were seemingly so humiliating that the Muslims were greatly perturbed over this apparently rude rebuff to the prestige of Islam, and even a stalwart like ʿUmar exclaimed in extreme grief and indignation that had the terms been settled by any other person than the Holy Prophet, he would have scorned to listen to them (Hishām).

The Treaty was indeed a great victory in that it opened the way to the expansion and spread of Islam and led to the fall of Mecca and ultimately to the conquest of the whole of Arabia. It proved to be a master-stroke of strategy as the Holy Prophet’s “political status as an equal and independent Power was acknowledged by the Quraish” (“Mohammad at Medina” by Montgomery Watt).

As the Treaty of Ḥudaibiya constitutes a great landmark in the early history of Islam and as it forms the principal topic dealt with in the Sūra under comment, it needs to be treated at some length.

The Holy Prophet had seen a vision that he was making a circuit of the Ka'ba along with a party of his followers. In fulfilment of his vision the Prophet started for Mecca with about 1500 Muslims to perform the Lesser Pilgrimage in 6 A.H., in the month of Dhu'l Qa'dah, one of the four sacred months in which, according to Arab tradition and usage, fighting was forbidden, even before Islam. When he reached ʿUsfān, a place a few miles distant from Mecca, he was informed by an advance party whom he had sent under the command of ʿAbdā bin Bishar’ that the Quraisb were bent upon barring his entry into Mecca. In order to avoid armed clash the Prophet changed his route and “after a fatiguing march through devious and rugged pathways reached Ḥudaibiya,” where he encamped. The Prophet had declared t’at he would accept all the demands of the Quraish for the honour of the Holy Place (Hishām), but the Quraish were firmly resolved not to allow him to enter Mecca, whatever he might say or do. Messages were exchanged in an attempt to find a solution of the impasse. After heated and protracted parleys in which the Holy Prophet left no stone unturned, even at the cost of his prestige, to arrive at a reasonable compromise with the Quraish, a treaty was signed of which the terms were:
3. That Allah may cover up for thee thy shortcomings, past and future, and that He may complete His favour upon thee, and may guide thee on a right path:  

War shall be suspended for ten years. Whosoever would like to join the Holy Prophet or enter into treaty with him, shall have liberty to do so, and likewise whosoever would like to join the Quraish or enter into treaty with them. If a believing man goes over to the Prophet from Mecca without the permission of his guardian, he shall be sent back to his guardian; but should any of the followers of the Prophet return to the Quraish, they shall not be sent back. The Prophet shall retire this year without entering the city. Next year he and his Companions may visit Mecca only for three days to perform Ḥajj (Lesser Pilgrimage), but they shall carry no arms save sheathed swords (Bukhari, Hisham & Muir).

The terms of the Treaty were demonstrably very humiliating. The Muslims were greatly upset. No words could adequately describe their grief, and sense of humiliation and injured pride. The third term was particularly galling. But the Holy Prophet was quite calm and tranquil. Being convinced of the moral force of Islam, he knew that "a believer who had once tasted the sweetness of faith would prefer to be cast into fire than to revert to disbelief" (Bukhari), and that he would be a source of strength to his religion and other believers wherever he might happen to be. The case of Abū Baṣīr, and that of Abū Jandal and their associates fully justified his conviction. He wanted to have a peaceful atmosphere. He knew that a peaceful soil was most congenial for the spread of Islam, and Islam did spread very rapidly after the signing of the Treaty of Ḥudaibiyah. When as a result of violation by the Quraish of the terms of the Treaty, the Prophet marched on Mecca two years later, ten thousand faithful Companions were under his command, instead of the paltry 1500 who were with him on the occasion of the signing of the Treaty. Thus the Treaty and its aftermath gave in advance the direct lie to the false and foolish propaganda, that was to be conducted by Christian Missionaries in our own time, that Islam was propagated by the sword.

One immediate effect of the Treaty was that the tribes of Banū Khuzā'ah entered into an alliance with the Holy Prophet, while the Banū Bakar sided with the Quraish, an incident which later on led to the march on Mecca. The Treaty did indeed prove to be "a clear victory." The Companions of the Holy Prophet were rightly proud of being present on the occasion, and quite justified in regarding the signing of the Treaty, and not the conquest of Mecca as "the victory referred to in the present verse" (Bukhari). According to them no victory was greater and more far-reaching in its results and effects than this Treaty (Hisham). And the Holy Prophet himself called it a victory (Baihaqui as quoted by Zurrāni).

3818. Important Words:

- **ليغفر** (that He may cover up). They say i.e., he put the goods into the bag and covered and protected them. مغفرة غفران and غفران both infinitive nouns mean, protection and preservation. مغفر means, helmet and غفر means, cloth worn beneath the veil to keep it clean (Lane, Mufradāt & Aqrab). See also 2:59; 14:42 & 40:56.

- **ذنب** (thy shortcomings). ذنب means, he followed his trail, not quitting his track.
therefore, signifies such natural failings or frailties as adhere to human nature. \( ذَنِب\) means, he committed a sin, a crime, a misdemeanour, fault, etc. According to Imam Rāghib \( ذَنِب\) means, such errors and mistakes as bring about a harmful result. It differs from \( عَبَّدُ\) in being either intentional or committed through inadvertence while \( عَبَّدُ\) is peculiarly intentional (Lane). See also 3 : 17.

**Commentary:**

The verse has been deliberately misrepresented, or, through lack of knowledge of Arabic idiom and phrase, misinterpreted, by Christian Missionaries as signifying that the Holy Prophet was guilty of some moral lapses. But it bears no such construction. It is an article of faith with Muslims, as enjoined by the Qur'ān, that God's Prophets are born sinless and they remain sinless throughout their lives. They are incapable of saying or doing anything contrary to Divine commandments (21 : 28). As they are commissioned by God to purge men of sins, they cannot themselves commit sins. And of Divine Messengers the Holy Prophet was the noblest and the purest. The Qur'ān abounds in verses which speak in glowing terms of the purity and spotlessness of his life. Here are a few of them:

(a) Say, ‘If you love Allah, follow me; then will Allah love you (3 : 32). (b) Verily, Allah has conferred a favour on the believers by raising among them a Messenger from among themselves, who recites to them His Signs, and purifies them and teaches them the Book and wisdom (3 : 165). (c) Say, my Prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of all the worlds (6 : 163). (d) Those who follow the Messenger, the Prophet, the Immaculate (sinless) One... (7 : 158). (e) O ye who believe! respond to Allah, and the Messenger when he (the Messenger) calls you that he may give you life (8 : 25). (f) Verily, you have in the Prophet of Allah an excellent model (33 : 22). (g) Verily, those who swear allegiance to thee, indeed, swear allegiance to Allah (48 : 11). (h) Your Companion has neither erred, nor has he gone astray, nor does he speak out of his own desire (53 : 3-4). (i) And thou dost surely possess very high moral excellences (68 : 3). (j) A noble Messenger, possessor of power, established in the presence of the Lord of the Throne, one who should be obeyed and who is faithful to his trust (81 : 20-22).

A man of such high moral stature, as the Holy Prophet, who raised a whole people, sunk into the lowest depths of moral turpitude, to the highest pinacles of spiritual eminence, could not possibly be guilty of such moral lapses as his detractors seek to impute to him.

A quite simple and harmless word — \( ذَنِب\) — is taken advantage of to malign him. The word, among other things, signifies such failings as adhere to human nature, and errors as are calculated to bring about harmful results. In this sense of the word the verse signifies that God would protect the Holy Prophet from the harmful results that would follow in the wake of the promised victory referred to in the preceding verse, inasmuch as, large masses of people would enter the fold of Islam, and naturally their moral and spiritual training and upbringing would not be of the desired standard. That is why wherever in the Qur'ān success and victories are promised to the Holy Prophet, he is enjoined to seek protection of God from his... i.e., human weakness which might stand in the way of the realization of his great mission which is the spread and expansion of Islam and the creation of a disciplined community of high morals. The fact that of the four words \( عَبَّدُ\) and \( عَبَّدُ\) and \( عَبَّدُ\) and \( ذَنِب\), which possess almost similar connotation,
4. And that Allah may help thee with a mighty help.\(^{3819}\)

5. He it is Who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers\(^a\) that they might add faith to their faith—\(^b\) and to Allah belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth, and Allah is All-Knowing, Wise—\(^{3820}\)

---

\(^{3819}\) Commentary:

Allah's help came in the form of the rapid spread of Islam in Arabia after the signing of the Treaty of Hudaibiya, and the Holy Prophet was acknowledged as the Head of an independent sovereign State.

\(^{3820}\) Commentary:

Twice, in this Sūra has the statement been made that "God sent down tranquility upon the believers" (see v. 27) and twice the declaration that "to Allah belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth." These expressions show that though, due to a misunderstanding about the terms of the Treaty of Hudaibiya, the believers were temporarily perturbed, they never lost peace of mind so far as fighting in the cause of Allah was concerned, and were fully convinced that Divine hosts were with them. That is why when a false news reached Hudaibiya that 'Uthmān, the Prophet's envoy to the Meccans, had been killed, and the Prophet invited Muslims to take a solemn oath at his hand that they would avenge
6. That He may make the believing men and the believing women enter the Gardens beneath which streams flow, wherein they will abide, and that He may remove their evils from them—and that, in the sight of Allah, is the supreme triumph—

7. And that He may punish the hypocritical men and the hypocritical women, and the idolatrous men and the idolatrous women, who entertain evil thoughts concerning Allah. On them shall fall an evil calamity; and the wrath of Allah is upon them. And He has cursed them, and has prepared Hell for them. And that indeed is an evil destination.

8. And to Allah belong the hosts of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is Mighty, Wise.

---

**Important Words:**

- **Darā' (calamity):** Derived from Darā', which means, it (an event) came about, Darā', means, the time took a turn; it changed. Darā', means, the wine-cup went round them. Darā', means, the circuit of a thing; an evil turn of fortune; calamity; defeat; rout; slaughter; death. Darā' means, calamities befall them (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

The verse means that every turn of fortune adds to the faith of believers and any addition to faith of believers increases the heart-burning and jealousy of disbelievers and the Hypocrites. The latter had entertained the false hope that the terms of the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyya would bring about a weakening of faith among the believers but the opposite happened and this caused heart-burning among them.
9. We have sent thee as a witness and a bearer of glad tidings and a Warner.\(^{3822}\)

10. That you should believe in Allah and His Messenger, and may help him, and honour him, and that you may glorify Him morning and evening.

11. Verily, those who swear allegiance to thee indeed swear allegiance to Allah. The hand of Allah is over their hands. So whoever breaks his oath, breaks it to his own loss; and whoever fulfils the covenant that he has made with Allah, He will surely give him a great reward.\(^{3823}\)

R. 2

12. Those of the desert Arabs, who contrived to be left behind, will say to thee, "Our possessions and our families kept us occupied, so ask forgiveness for us." They say with their tongues that which is not in their hearts. Say, "Who can avail you aught against Allah, if He intends you some harm, or if He intends you some benefit? Nay, Allah is Well-Aware of what you do."\(^{3824}\)

3822-A. Commentary:

The verse refers to three attributes of the Holy Prophet. He was \(\text{شائٰه} \) \(\text{i.e.}, \) his whole life constituted a standing testimony to the existence of the Almighty God Who gave him success against very heavy odds. He was \(\text{میسر} \) because he gave believers the glad tidings of bliss and benediction in this life as well as in the life to come, and he was \(\text{نذير} \) (Warner) for those who rejected his Message.

3823. Commentary:

The reference in the verse is to the oath taken by the believers at the hands of the Holy Prophet under a tree at Hudaibiya when a rumour reached him that ‘Uthmān, his special envoy, had been killed by the Meccans. The believers were asked to declare on solemn oath that they would stand by the Holy Prophet at all costs and would fight under his banner to the bitter end.

3824. Commentary:

Reference in this verse is to those Bedouin tribes around Medina who apparently had
13. ‘Nay, you thought that the Messenger and the believers would never come back to their families, and that was made to appear pleasing to your hearts, and you thought an evil thought, and you were a ruined people.’

14. And as for those who believe not in Allah and His Messenger—we have surely prepared for the disbelievers a blazing fire.

15. And to Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He forgives whom He pleases, and punishes whom He please. And Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.

Wish being father to the thought, the Hypocrites, whenever invited by the Prophet to join him in an expedition, entertained the fond hope that Muslims being very weak would never come back safe to their families. Therefore, on one pretext or another, they requested to be excused. But their wishful thinking, says the verse, always ended in frustration and severe disappointment, and the Muslims returned successful from almost every expedition.
16. Those who contrived to be left behind will say, when you go forth to the spoils to take them, 'Let us follow you.' They seek to change the decree of Allah. Say, 'You shall not follow us. Thus has Allah said beforehand.' Then they will say, 'Nay, but you envy us.' Not so; in fact they understand not except a little.\textsuperscript{3826}

17. Say to the desert Arabs who contrived to be left behind, 'You shall be called to fight against a people of mighty valour; you shall fight them until they surrender. Then, if you obey, Allah will give you a good reward, but if you turn your backs, as you turned your backs before, He will punish you with a painful punishment.'\textsuperscript{3827}

\textsuperscript{3826} Commentary:

The reference in the words, "When you go forth to the spoils that you take them," is to the booty which fell into the hands of Muslims in the Khaibar expedition. The Sūra under comment was revealed to the Prophet when he was on his way back from Hudaibiya. In v. 20, the Muslims have been promised great spoils. It is to these spoils that the present verse refers. Having returned from Hudaibiya, the Prophet, after a short stay at Medina, marched against the Jews of Khaibar to punish them for their repeated acts of treachery. Those Bedouin tribes who had contrived to remain behind when the Prophet went to Mecca for the Lesser Pilgrimage, finding that his cause had prospered and that they would have a good share of the booty if they joined the expedition to Khaibar, requested the Prophet to be allowed to accompany the Muslim army. They were told that they could not do so as the promise of booty was made only to those sincere Muslims who were with the Holy Prophet at Hudaibiya.

\textsuperscript{3827} Commentary:

The words "a people of mighty valour," may refer to the mighty forces of the Byzantine and Iranian Empires which were far superior in means, material and numbers than any other enemy the Muslims had met so far. The verse constituted a warning that the Muslims would come into conflict with those mighty foes and would have to wage prolonged wars with them till the latter were broken and brought to their knees. The laggards are thus told that though they cannot be allowed to march against the Jews of Khaibar and partake of the booty, yet in the near future they would be
18. *There is no blame on the blind, nor is there blame on the lame, nor is there blame on the sick, if they go not forth to fight.* And whoso obeys Allah and His Messenger, He will make him enter the Gardens beneath which streams flow; but whoso turns his back, him will He punish with a grievous punishment.  

3827 A. **Commentary:**

The disbelievers have repeatedly been threatened with “a grievous and burning punishment,” in the Sūra. This is to warn them that the terms of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah over which they and their fellows had gloated, would prove for them an abiding source of ignominious heart-burning.

3828. **Commentary:**

The swearing of allegiance referred to in the verse took place at Hudaibiyah under an acacia tree after a report had reached the Holy Prophet that in breach of ambassadorial usage or etiquette his envoy, ‘Uthmān, had been killed at Mecca. It was, perhaps, not so much the reported murder of ‘Uthmān as the violation of a sacred and time-honoured custom that exhausted the Prophet’s patience. He invited his followers to take a solemn oath at his hand that they would fight the Quraish to the last breath of their lives. The oath came to be known as ba‘āt al-Riḍwān, which signified that those lucky people who had taken the oath had obtained God’s pleasure.

The words, “He knew what was in their hearts,” mean that God was well conversant with the state of their minds, *viz.*, that they were quite honest and sincere in their oaths and were anxious to vindicate their sincerity with their blood.

What greater proof could there be that “God sent down tranquillity on Muslims,” than that, being only about 1500 in number and being far away from home, friendless and surrounded by hostile tribes and faced by a powerful enemy who was entrenched in his citadel, the Muslims were prepared to fight rather than agree to the proposed terms of the Treaty. The expression, “He rewarded them with a victory near at hand” refers to the victory of Khāibār. On his return from Hudaibiyah the Prophet led an expedition
20. And great spoils that they will take. Allah is Mighty, Wise.\(^{3829}\)

21. Allah has promised you great spoils that you will take, and He has given you this in advance, and has restrained the hands of men from you, that it may be a Sign for the believers, and that He may guide you on a right path.\(^{3830}\)

against the Jews of Khaibar (a great hot-bed of Jewish intrigue and conspiracy) with those Muslims who were with him at Hudaibiya. Judged by worldly standards of political strategy, and in view of the apparently humiliating terms of the Treaty and of the feeling of frustration that some of the Companions felt at those terms, the Holy Prophet should have been a beaten and embittered man, yet God has styled the Treaty “a clear victory” (v. 2), “a grand achievement” (v. 6); “a mighty reward” (v. 11); and “the completion and perfection of His favour on the Prophet” (v. 3). What was it that made this “humiliating” Treaty such a significant event in the annals of Islam? The answer is: Because it opened the flood-gates of spiritual and political conquests for Islam. The signing of the Treaty of Hudaibiya was immediately followed by the conquest of Khaibar, a Jewish stronghold and a source of great danger and anxiety for Muslims. Besides, the Islamic Republic at Medina came to be recognized as an independent sovereign State, and within the brief space of three or four years the whole of Arabia was at the feet of the Holy Prophet, followed by a chain of victories which culminated in the defeat and destruction of the great and powerful Byzantine and Iranian Empires.

3829. Commentary:

“Great Spoils” may refer to the great gains which the Muslims got as a result of the “near victory” promised in the preceding verse.

The repeated mention in the Sūra of the Divine attributes “Mighty,” “Wise” and “Powerful over all things” seems to signify that the seemingly humiliating Treaty of Hudaibiya proved a source of great power for Muslims, as it had been signed by the Prophet in obedience to God’s command Who is Mighty, Wise and Powerful.

3830. Commentary:

“Great Spoils” mentioned here may refer to the great booty which fell into the hands of Muslims in the conquests which followed the victory at Khaibar, in the rest of Arabia and the neighbouring countries, but the words “He has given you this in advance,” evidently refer to the spoils gained at Khaibar. The words “has restrained the hands of men from you”, mean that the Treaty of Hudaibiya had ushered in a period of peace for Muslims.

2450
22. And He has promised you another victory, which you have not yet achieved, but Allah has surely compassed it. And Allah has power over all things.\[3831\]

23. And if those who disbelieve should fight you, they would certainly turn their backs; then they would find neither protector nor helper.\[3832\]

24. "Such has ever been the law of Allah; and thou shalt not find any change in the law of Allah.\[3833\]

25. And He it is Who withheld their hands from you and your hands from them in the valley of Mecca, after He had given you victory over them. And Allah sees all that you do.\[3834\]

\[a17: 78; 33: 63; 35: 44.\]

3831. **Commentary:**

The verse embodies a prophecy that Muslims will achieve other great victories after the victory of Khaibar.

3832. **Commentary:**

The verse purports to say that wherever true believers will stand facing disbelievers in battle array, the disbelievers would suffer defeat. The verse may also mean that if fighting had broken out at Hudaibya the disbelievers would certainly have suffered defeat.

3833. **Commentary:**

The verse means that it has always been the law of God that truth must ultimately triumph and falsehood suffer defeat; and God's law knows no change. This fact is writ large on the face of human history.

3834. **Commentary:**

The words "after He had given you victory over them," may signify that in view of the circumstances in which the Muslims were then placed and of the far-reaching results it produced, the Treaty of Hudaibya was tantamount to a great victory. The words may also refer to the victories that God had granted to Muslims before they came to Hudaibya—the victory at Badr, the safe return of Muslims and the Holy Prophet to Medina from Uihud after they had been placed in a very dangerous and delicate situation, and the complete frustration of the Meccans in their evil designs to destroy Islam in the Battle of the Ditch when they were repulsed with severe loss, etc. In a sense these were all victories of believers over disbelievers.
26. It is they who disbelieved and hindered you from the Sacred Mosque and the offering which was prevented from reaching its place of sacrifice. And had it not been for some believing men and believing women whom you knew not and whom you might have trampled down unwittingly, so that blame might have attached to you on their account, He would have permitted you to fight but He withheld you that He might admit into His mercy whom He will. If they had been separated from the disbelievers, we would have surely punished those of them who disbelieved with a grievous punishment. 3835

3835. Important Words:

مورة (blame) is derived from عر (‘arra). They say عر الأبل i.e., the camels were or became mangy or scabby. عر means, he did to him an abominable thing; he did to him what he disliked; he disgraced him. عر اليه means, he aspersed him or charged or upbraided him with evil, or he wronged him. مورة means, a cause of reviling or being reviled; a crime or sin that is noxious like mange or scab; a foul or abominable thing; a cause of grief or vexation; disgrace; annoyance, hurt, harm or injury (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The verse means that though the Meccans gloated over the terms of the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyya which, in their ignorance, they thought were very advantageous to them and humiliating for Muslims, and though the latter feeling that the terms were being forcibly wrung from them were crest-fallen and did not know that in reality the terms had laid the foundations of a very prosperous and bright future for Islam, yet God had His own design in not permitting the fight to take place. There was a nucleus of Muslims in Mecca and if the fight had taken place, Muslim army would have unknowingly killed their own brethren in Faith, thereby causing great injury to their own cause, and earning obloquy and opprobrium for themselves. In fact, from whatever angle the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyya may be viewed it was indeed a great victory.
27. When those who disbelieved harboured in their hearts prideful indignation, the indignation of the Days of Ignorance, "Allah sent down His tranquillity on His Messenger and on the believers, and made them adhere firmly to the principle of righteousness, and they were better entitled to it and more worthy of it. And Allah knows everything full well. 3836

4 28. Surely, has Allah fulfilled for His Messenger the vision. You shall certainly enter the Sacred Mosque, if Allah will, in security, some having their heads shaven and others having their hair cut short, and you will have no fear. But He knew what you knew not. He has, in fact, ordained for you, besides that, a victory near at hand. 3837

3836. Important Words:

حمية (prideful indignation) is inf. noun from حمي which means, he refused to bear or endure or tolerate wrongful treatment. They say حمي عنه أو منه i.e., he was ashamed, and he disdained or scorned to do it. حمي عليه means, he was angry with him. حمية (syn. أمنة and غيره) means, disdain, scorn or indignation; jealousy; indignation which is the result of a feeling of pride (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The verse means that against their own tradition and usage that access to, and the circuit of, the Ka'ba was not to be prevented in the four Sacred Months, the pagans of Mecca, from a false sense of dignity and national pride, had made it a point of honour with them not to allow Muslims to enter Mecca and perform the Lesser Pilgrimage (عمرة). But "Allah sent His tranquillity" upon the Muslims and though they were greatly upset over the seemingly humiliating terms of the Treaty, yet in deference to the command of their noble Master they bore it all with becoming restraint and patience and did not abandon the path of rectitude and righteousness under the most severe provocation. The Companions of the Holy Prophet alone were capable of setting such a noble example.

3837. Commentary:

The Holy Prophet had seen a vision that he was performing the circuit of the Ka'ba with his Companions (Bukhari). The Prophet set out for Mecca with about 1500 of his Companions to perform the Lesser Pilgrimage. It is to this "vision" that the verse under comment refers. The Prophet was not allowed access
29. He it is Who has sent His Messenger, with guidance and the Religion of truth, that He may make it prevail over all other religions. And sufficient is Allah as a Witness.\(^3838\)

to the Ka'ba by the Quraish. On the contrary, he had to sign a treaty of which the terms as mentioned above seemed to be very humiliating and hurtful to the Muslims' self-respect. They were highly upset, the illustrious 'Umar, more than any one else, not only at the terms, but also at the fact that the vision as he understood it had not been fulfilled, could not understand how the Prophet's journey had served its purpose. He was not quite satisfied with the explanation that the vision did not signify that the Pilgrimage would be performed that very year. He was in this frame of mind when, on the way back to Medina, this Sūra was revealed and the Prophet called for him and recited it to him. The Sūra was clear and emphatic that the Prophet's vision was true and that the Muslims would most certainly enter the Ka'ba and perform the ceremonies of the Lesser Pilgrimage. The Prophet's journey, besides serving other useful purposes to which reference is already made, established an important precedent that sometimes even great Prophets of God are liable to place seemingly erroneous interpretations on their visions.

3838. Commentary:

In the preceding verse reference was made to the vision of the Holy Prophet which had brought about the Treaty of Hudaibiya which in turn led to the very rapid expansion of Islam in Arabia and to its consolidation, and ultimately to the fall of Mecca and the submission of the whole of Arabia to the Holy Prophet. The present verse makes a very bold prophecy to the effect that not only would Islam prevail in Arabia but would also eventually triumph over all other religions. The signs of the fulfilment of this prophecy are already in evidence.
30. Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. And those who are with him are "hard against the disbelievers and tender among themselves. Thou seest them bowing and prostrating themselves in Prayer, seeking Allah’s grace and pleasure. Their mark is upon their faces, being the traces of prostrations. This is their description in the Torah. And their description in the Gospel is like unto a seed-produce that sends forth its sprout, then makes it strong; it then becomes thick and stands firm on its stem, delighting the sowers—that He may cause the disbelievers to burn with rage at the sight of them. Allah has promised, unto those of them who believe and do good works, forgiveness and a great reward. 

Commentary:
The preceding verse had made a great prophecy about the eventual triumph of Islam over all other religious systems. The verse under comment signifies that the foundations of the grand and glorious future of Islam have already been laid by "Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah and those who are with him," and mentions some of the noble qualities of good and sincere believers, through whose selfless efforts this consummation will be brought about. They are brave, firm and courageous and not susceptible to the evil influences of bad persons and environment; on the contrary, they are loving and kind towards each other. These are the two essential characteristics of a progressive and rising people who seek to leave their mark on the course of world events. Elsewhere in the Qur’an (5:55) the true and good Muslims have been described as أذلة على المؤمنين أعزة على الكافرين i.e. kind and humble towards believers and hard and firm against disbelievers.

The words, "this is their description in the Torah," may refer to the Biblical description,
viz., "he shined forth from mount Paran and he came with ten thousands of saints" (Deut. 33:2). And the expression, "and their description in the Gospel is like unto a seed-produce" may refer to another Biblical parable, viz., "Behold, a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed seeds some fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold" (Matt. 13:3-8). The former description seems to apply to the Companions of the Holy Prophet and the latter parable to the followers of Jesus's counterpart, the Promised Messiah, who, from very small and insignificant beginning, are destined to develop into a mighty organization and gradually but progressively to carry the Message of Islam to the ends of the earth till it will prevail and triumph over all religions, and its opponents will wonder at, and be jealous of, its power and prestige.
CHAPTER 49

AL-ḤUJURĀT

(Revealed before Hijra)

Title, Context, and Date of Revelation

By common consent this is a Medinite Sūra. It was revealed in the 9th year of Hijra, after the fall of Mecca. The Sūra takes its title from its 5th verse in which calling out to the Holy Prophet from behind the Ḥujurāt (private compartments) has been strongly condemned, since shouting out to him is bad manners and is also likely to intrude upon his privacy and precious time.

As with the fall of Mecca Islam had become a great political power, and large masses of people had entered its fold, the Sūra was revealed to teach good manners and morals to the newly-initiated people. The Sūra also deals with some social evils which find their way into a materially-advanced and wealthy society (the Muslims had become such a society after the conquest of Arabia), and speaks of the accession to Islam of great political power and material wealth. Naturally, the Sūra also embodies regulations for the settlement of international disputes.

Summary of Subject-Matter

The Sūra opens with strict injunctions to Muslims to show full regard and respect to the Holy Prophet which befits his station as a Divine Messenger. They are also enjoined not to anticipate his decisions but to give unquestioning obedience to his commands. They are further enjoined not to raise their voices above his voice; this not only constitutes bad manners but also shows lack of proper respect which is calculated to undermine discipline in the Muslim Community.

The Sūra then warns Muslims to be on their guard against giving credence to false rumours, as such rumours, if readily accepted as true, without being subjected to sifting and searching examination, are calculated to land Muslims into very awkward situations. It further lays down, in brief words, rules, on which, if carried out with sincere intent and honest motives, a League of Nations or a United Nations Organisation can be built on sound and solid foundations. Next, the Sūra, mentions some social evils which, if not effectively checked in time, eat into the vitals of a community and undermine its whole social structure. Of these social evils the common ones are suspicion, false accusation, spying, back-biting, and the most pronounced and far-reaching in its evil consequences, viz., conceit and pride born of a false sense of racial superiority. The Qur'ān recognizes no basis of superiority save that of piety and righteous conduct.

The Sūra ends on the note that true and sincere belief is a Divine favour and the test of a true believer lies in the fact that if once he has given his allegiance to a noble cause, he strives with his whole being to promote it.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful."

2. O ye who believe! be not forward in the presence of Allah and His Messenger, but fear Allah. Verily, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

3. O ye who believe! raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet, nor speak aloud to him, as you speak aloud to one another, lest your works become vain while you perceive not.

---

3840. **Commentary:**

See 1:1.

3841. **Commentary:**

Mecca had fallen. The whole of Arabia lay prostrate at the Prophet's feet. Life had become quite safe and secure for Muslims and wealth and great riches had come into their possession. A life of ease and comfort generally follows in the wake of riches, resulting in lack of discipline and other very serious social evils. Therefore rules of conduct have been revealed in this Sūra to safeguard the Muslim Community against these evils. They are told to show proper respect and regard for the Holy Prophet and to give him unqualified obedience and not to anticipate his commands or to prefer their own wishes to his.

3842. **Commentary:**

The verse lays great stress on observing an attitude of utmost respectfulness towards the Holy Prophet. The Muslims should not talk loudly in his presence or address him aloud. This is not only bad manners but is calculated to do moral injury to one so rude as not to show respect due to the Leader.
4. Verily, those who lower their voices in the presence of the Messenger of Allah—those are they whose hearts Allah has purified for righteousness. For them is forgiveness and a great reward.\textsuperscript{3843}

5. Those who shout out to thee from without thy private apartments—most of them lack understanding.\textsuperscript{3844}

6. And if they had waited patiently until thou came out to them it would be better for them. But Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.

7. O ye who believe! if an unrighteous person brings you any news, investigate it fully, lest you harm a people in ignorance, and then be repentant for what you have done.\textsuperscript{3845}

\textsuperscript{3843} Important Words:

*الَّذِينَ يَفْضِلُونَ أَصْوَاتَهُمْ عَلَىَّ إِلَّا لِّلْحَقِّ* (4:4) is derived from *الَّذِينَ احْتَضَنَّ هُمْ عَنْ ذَكَرِيَّةَ اللَّهِ* (4:3). They say, *فَلَنَا* i.e., he tried or put to the test such a one.

*وَلَوَانْهِمْ صَبَرُوا حَتَّى تَخْلَفَ إِلَيْهِمْ إِكْتَانُ ۖ أُعِينُوا فِي الْأَمْرِ عَلَىٰنَا* (4:5) means, he flogged him with twenty stripes.

*وَالَّذِينَ كُتِبَ لَهُمُ الْفِضْلُ مِنَ اللَّهِ* (4:5) means, he purified the silver by putting it in the fire.

*وَالَّذِينَ كُتِبَ لَهُمُ الْفِضْلُ مِنَ اللَّهِ* (4:5) means, he took out the earth from the well and cleared it (Tāj & Rāghib).

Commentary:

To speak in low tones in the presence of the Prophet is indicative of respect for him and of one's own humility of heart which is a good moral quality; while unnecessarily raising of voice smacks of conceit and arrogance.

\textsuperscript{3844} Commentary:

Calling out to the Prophet in a loud voice from outside his house amounts to intruding upon his privacy and shows lack of respect for his person and for his valuable time; and only an ill-mannered person would be guilty of such foolish behaviour.

\textsuperscript{3845} Commentary:

Though after the fall of Mecca, at the time when this Sūra was revealed, almost the whole of Arabia had entered the fold of Islam, some tribes still refused to accept the new order of things and were determined upon fighting the Muslims to the bitter end. Moreover, the neighbouring Byzantine and Persian Empires were awakening to a realization of the challenge to their power which they thought had arisen in Arabia, and war with Islam seemed
8. And know that among you is the Messenger of Allah; if he were to comply with your wishes in most matters, you would surely come to trouble; but Allah has endeared the faith to you and "has made it look beautiful to your hearts, and He has made disbelief, wickedness and disobedience hateful to you. Such indeed are those who follow the right course.  

9. Through the grace and favour of Allah. And Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.

10. And if two parties of believers fight each other, make peace between them; then if after that one of them transgresses against the other, fight the party that transgresses until it returns to the command of Allah. Then if it returns, make peace between them with equity, and act justly. Verily, Allah loves the just.

3846. Commentary:

The verse continues the general theme of the Sûra, the immediately preceding verse constituting a necessary parenthesis. In the earlier verses the Muslims were enjoined to give unquestioning obedience to the Holy Prophet and to show respect to him which befitted his station as God’s great Prophet. In this verse they are told that the Prophet would seek their counsel in matters concerning them but he should not be expected to follow their advice as he received guidance from on high and because also his was the final responsibility, and their judgment, at best, might be defective. It was enough for them that God, through His Grace, “has endeared faith to you.”

3847. Commentary:

The central theme of the Sûra is the solidarity of Islam. Directions and rules of conduct which are calculated to achieve and maintain this solidarity have been laid down in it in

--
some detail. Some of these rules have been mentioned in the preceding verses, others follow in the verses that come later. A great danger to the security and solidarity of the Muslim State or Community are the disputes and quarrels that haply might arise between different Muslim groups or parties. The verse under comment provides a most effective remedy to compose these quarrels. Primarily, the verse deals with the settlement of disputes between Muslim parties, but it equally embodies a sound basis on which a really effective "League of Nations" or a "United Nations Organization" can be built. The verse lays down the following principles for the maintenance of international peace.

As soon as there are indications of disagreement between two nations, the other nations, instead of taking sides with one or the other, should at once serve notice upon them, calling upon them to submit their differences for settlement to a "League of Nations" or "United Nations Organization," as the case may be. If they agree, the dispute will be amicably settled. But if one of them refuses to submit to the "League," or having submitted refuses to accept the award of the "League," and prepares to make war, the other nations should all fight it. It is evident that one nation, however strong, cannot withstand the united might of all other nations and is bound to make a speedy submission. In that event, terms of peace should be settled between the two original parties to the dispute. The other nations should act merely as mediators and not as parties to the dispute, and should not put forward new claims arising out of the conflict with the refractory nation, for that would lay the foundation of fresh disputes and quarrels. The terms of peace should be just and equitable with reference to the merits of the dispute; they should be confined to the original dispute between the parties and should not be allowed to travel beyond it.

It is only such a "League" or "Organization" which can safely be entrusted with the maintenance of international peace, not a League or Organization whose very existence is dependent upon the goodwill of others.

384. Commentary:

The verse lays special stress on Islamic Brotherhood. Islam tolerates no discord or dissensions between brothers. If there happens to arise a quarrel or dispute between two Muslim individuals or groups, other Muslims are bound at once to bring about reconciliation between the quarrelling parties. Islam's real strength lies in this ideal of brotherhood which transcends all barriers of caste, colour or clime.
12. O ye who believe! let not one people deride another people, haply they may be better than they, nor let women deride other women, haply they may be better than they. And defame not your own people, nor call one another by nick-names. Bad indeed is evil reputation after the profession of belief; and those who repent not, such are the wrong-doers. — 3849

13. O ye who believe! avoid much suspicion, for suspicion in some cases is a sin. And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his brother who is dead? Certainly you would loathe it. And fear Allah, surely, Allah is Oft-Returning with compassion and is Merciful. — 3850

---

3849. **Important Words:**

لا تلوموا (defame not) is derived from لوم which means, he called him by a surname or nick-name and is syn. with لقاب (laqqaba), mostly signifying, he called him by a nick-name, or a name of reproach or an opprobrious appellation. It also signifies, he upbraided or reproached him; or the like, being syn. with لوم (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

See next verse.

3850. **Commentary:**

As stated above the principal theme of the Sūra is the establishment of concord, amity and goodwill between Muslim individuals and groups and therefore it has mentioned some of those social evils which cause discord, dissensions and differences, and corrode, corrupt and conta-
14. O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female; and We have made you into tribes and sub-tribes that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.

Commentary:

From the subject of Islamic Brotherhood to which reference has been made in the preceding two verses, the Sūra proceeds to lay down, in the verse under comment, the basis of an all-comprehensive, all pervading brotherhood of man. The verse, in fact, constitutes the Magna Carta of human fraternity and equality. It has firmly laid the axe at the false and foolish notions of superiority, born of racial arrogance or national conceit. All men having been “created from a male and a female” as human beings have been declared equal in the sight of God. The worth of a man is not to be judged by the pigment of his skin, the amount of wealth he possesses or by his rank or social status, descent or pedigree, but by his moral greatness and the way in which he discharges his obligations to God and man. The whole human race is but one family. Division into tribes, nations, and races is meant to give them a better knowledge of one another, in order that they might benefit from one another’s national characteristics and good qualities. This, according to Islam, is the criterion of a person’s greatness and this is the only true and real criterion. The Holy Prophet explained the beautiful idea of the brotherhood of man inculcated in this verse in his own inimitable way on the occasion of the Last Pilgrimage at Mecca, a short time before his death. Addressing a vast concourse of Muslims the Prophet said, “O ye men! Your God is One and your ancestor is one. An Arab possesses no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab over an Arab. A white is in no way superior to a red, nor, for that matter,
15. The Arabs of the desert say, 'We believe.' Say, "You have not believed yet, but rather say, 'We have submitted, for true belief has not yet entered into your hearts.'" But if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not detract anything from your deeds. Surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.  

3852

16. "The believers are only those who truly believe in Allah and His Messenger, and then doubt not, but strive with their possessions and their persons in the cause of Allah. It is they who are truthful." 

3853

a red to a white, but only to the extent to which he discharges his duty to God and man. The most honoured among you in the sight of God is the most righteous among you" (Baihaqi). These noble words spoken by the Prophet during his Farewell Pilgrimage which have resounded through the centuries epitomize one of Islam's loftiest ideals and strongest principles. It goes to the credit of the Holy Prophet that in a society riven with class distinction, he preached a message intensely democratic.

3852. Important Words:

أَلْت (will not detract) is derived from أَلْت which means, it (a thing) decreased, diminished, lessened; it became defective or deficient; incomplete or imperfect. أَلْت اُوْلِيَ الْحَقَّ means, he diminished to him his right or due or defrauded him of a portion of it (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

All Muslims form an integral part of Islamic Brotherhood. Islam confers equal rights on the unlettered and uncultured sons of the desert as it does on the civilized and cultured dwellers of cities and towns; only it exhorts the former to make greater efforts to learn and assimilate the teachings of Islam and make them the rule of their lives.

3853. Commentary:

True and sincere belief to which reference has been made in the preceding verse consists of three important ingredients—strong and firm faith in Allah, absolute freedom from doubt and misgiving as to the truth of Islam and striving with all means within one's power in the cause of God. It is only those sincere and steadfast Muslims who possess these qualifications who are entitled to be called "the truthful ones" i.e., those who have fulfilled their pledged word to God.
17. Say, "Will you acquaint Allah with your faith, while Allah knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and Allah knows all things full well?"

18. They deem it as a favour to thee that they have embraced Islam. Say, 'Deem not your embracing Islam a favour unto me. On the contrary, Allah has bestowed a favour upon you in that He has guided you to the true Faith, if you are truthful.'

19. Verily, Allah knows the secrets of the heavens and the earth. And Allah sees all what you do.

3854. Commentary:

True and sincere faith is the most precious possession of a Muslim. By accepting Islam he does on favour to anybody; on the contrary, it is a favour of God that one is guided to the Truth.
CHAPTER 50
QĀF
(Revealed before Hijra)

Title, Date of Revelation, and Context

This Sūra is of Meccan origin. All competent authorities assign its revelation to the early Meccan period. Its tenor and contents support this view.

The Sūra is the first of a group of seven Chapters which end with Sūra Alwaqiah. Like all Meccan Sūrās, it lays special stress, in emphatic and prophetic language, on the Qur'ān being the revealed Word of God, on Resurrection being an undoubted reality, and particularly on the ultimate triumph of the cause of Islam. The Sūra points to the phenomena of nature and to the histories of the past Prophets as guides leading to this inevitable conclusion. The Sūra takes its title from its initial abbreviated letter ﻕ (Qāf).

The preceding two Sūrās had dealt with the prospects of a great and glorious future for Islam, and also with the social and political problems that arise when power and wealth come to a people. The present Sūra having the abbreviated letter ﻕ (Qāf) in its beginning, points to the fact that the Almighty God has the power to make the weak and disorganized Arabs into a powerful nation, and that He will certainly bring about this consummation, using the Qur'ān as the means and instrument for achieving that purpose.

Subject-Matter

The Sūra opens with the abbreviated letter Qāf (ﻕ) which is the last of the abbreviated letters used in the Qur'ān. It represents the Divine attribute قادر (Qādir or Qadîr) meaning, the Mighty, the Powerful, and at once starts to deal with the all-important subject of Resurrection: and in order to prove the truth of this primal fact uses as an argument the phenomenon that a people, who for long centuries were spiritually dead and defunct, received a new and vigorous life through the Qur'ān. The Sūra proceeds to say that the Holy Prophet's enemies cannot bring themselves to accept the fact of a Warner appearing from among them to tell them that they will be raised to life after "they are dead and have become dust." They are told to study the wonderful creation of the celestial firmament with the beautiful stars and planets which adorn it and which work with a regularity and punctuality that knows no deviation. They are further told to ponder over the creation of the vast expanse of earth which grows all sorts of fruits and foods for its dwellers. The Author and Architect of this great and complex universe, the Sūra says, possesses the power and wisdom to give man a new life after his physical habitat has disintegrated.

Next, the Sūra points to the purposefulness of the creation of man—God's supreme creature and His noblest handiwork—and to man's freedom and complete responsibility and
accountability for his actions, in a life after death, wherein he will be punished or rewarded according to the good or bad life he might have led in this world. Those who had wasted their lives in the quest of evil pursuits would be thrown into Hell, the punishments of which would be the representations of their evil deeds done in this life. And so would the rewards of Paradise be the representations of the good and noble actions of the righteous and the God-fearing in this life. Only the things of the next world would be of a nature different from those to which we are accustomed in this life.

The Sūra ends on the note that the creation of the universe, and of man—the apex and acme of creation—shows that the wise Creator could not have brought into existence this complex universe without a great purpose behind it. This leads to the conclusion that there must be and there is a life beyond the grave and that all Divine Messengers and Prophets were raised to teach man this important religious doctrine, and that those who refuse to believe in this Divine mission of the Prophets incur a liability in the Hereafter.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful."

2. Qaf. By the glorious Qur'an, thou art a Messenger of God.

**Commentary:**

See 1:1.  

3856. **Important Words:**

The letter ق (Qaf) may stand for the Divine attribute قادر (Qādir) which means, the Mighty God; or the letter may stand for حق i.e., the Resurrection is an undoubted reality. This is the last abbreviated letter used in the Qur'an and therefore possesses a special significance. For a detailed explanation, however, of the abbreviated letters (المقطومات) see 2:2 & 19:2.

(by) among other things may mean, 'by' or 'I swear' or 'I cite as witness or evidence.'  

See also 37:2.

(Glorious) is derived from مجيد (majāda) which means, he was or became possessed of or characterized by glory, honour, dignity, nobility, etc., or he was or became glorious, in a state of honour, dignity; noble. مجيد (majāda) means, he made it (a gift) large or abundant. They say إجده فلان نقي i.e., such a one gave us a sufficient and super-abundant entertainment. The Arabs say إجده سياً وذآ i.e., he reviled and dispraised him much.

The construction of this verse exactly resembles that of 38:2. Taking the abbreviated letter...
3. But they wonder that there has come to them a Warner from among themselves. And the disbelievers say, 'This is a strange thing'.

4. 'What! when we are dead and have become dust, shall we be raised up again? That is a return far from possible.

5. We know how much the earth diminishes of them and how much it adds to them, and with Us is a Book that preserves everything.

as signifying 'the Powerful God,' the verse may mean that the Powerful God swears by the Qur'an, or that He cites the Qur'an as witness, that by acting upon its teaching and making it a rule of their lives, its followers will achieve glory, greatness and spiritual and material grandeur. And by taking the letter as signifying i.e., the Resurrection is an undoubted reality, the verse would signify that Resurrection will certainly take place and that the glorious Qur'an can be cited as an evidence to prove this claim. The proof consists in the fact: (1) that the Qur'an has made two claims, viz., that by acting upon its teaching the weak, oppressed and persecuted followers of the Holy Prophet will achieve glory, greatness and spiritual and material eminence and an honoured place in the comity of world’s great nations; and (2) that Resurrection will undoubtedly take place. The fulfilment of the first prophecy, the verse implies, will substantiate and establish the truth of the second claim.

Commentary:

The verse purports to say that in spite of the fact that from time immemorial God has been sending His Messengers and Prophets to guide men to the way of truth and righteousness, the people, whenever there appeared a Prophet, wondered, and considered it highly improbable that God should commission an ordinary man from among themselves. This attitude of disbelievers towards Divine Messengers has been referred to at several other places also in the Qur'an (7:64; 10:3; 38:5).

Commentary:

Greater is the disbelievers' wonder at the idea, says the verse, that when they are dead and are reduced to dust, they will get a new life.

Commentary:

The verse refutes the disbelievers' objection mentioned in the preceding verse, viz., that when they are dead and reduced to broken bones and particles of dust they would be raised again. It is the physical body, says the verse, that disintegrates and perishes. The soul is imperishable and will be given a new body to account for the deeds done in this world which are recorded in "a Book that preserves everything." The verse may also mean that even the particles of objects which the earth
6. Nay, they rejected the truth when it came to them, and so they are in a state of confusion.\textsuperscript{3860}

7. Have they not looked at the sky above them, how We have made it and adorned it,\textsuperscript{a} and there are no flaws in it?\textsuperscript{3861}

8. And the earth—We have spread it out, and placed therein firm mountains;\textsuperscript{b} and We have made to grow therein every kind of beautiful species,

\textsuperscript{a}15:17; 37:7; 41:13; 67:6. \textsuperscript{b}13:4; 15:20; 31:11; 77:28. \textsuperscript{c}27:61; 31:11.

disintegrates are well preserved in God’s knowledge. It may also signify that as complete knowledge about all the details of a thing presupposes the power to create it, and God being the Possessor of full knowledge of human anatomy and the process of its disintegration could recreate it after it had perished.

The verse may also signify that just as the earth corrupts and swallows up dead bodies, it also possesses the means of nourishing living ones.

3860. Important Words:

\textsuperscript{3860} (state of confusion) is derived from مَرَج (maraja) which means, he mixed a thing with another thing or two things together. مَرَج الآخر (marija) means, the affair became corrupt, spoiled, disordered or in a confused or disordered state. مَرَج الناس means, the people became confused so that they could not extricate themselves from their perplexity (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The verse means that though disbelievers always reject the Divine Message, their rejection or denial does not rest on sure ground. They are always in a confused state of mind. They do not know what they should make of the Message. They call it poetry, sorcery, the day-dreaming of an ambitious visionary, the confused vapourings of an unhinged mind, or the forgery of an impostor (21:6). But the Holy Prophet and his followers stand on the bed-rock of certainty and sure knowledge.

3861. Important Words:

\textsuperscript{3861} (flaws) is the plural of فِروج which means, a cleft, an opening, a gap, and hence a flaw or defect (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

This and the following few verses draw attention to the marvels of creation, the wonderful design in the universe, to the celestial firmament with its countless beautiful planets and stars, to earth and its wide expanse teeming with human and animal life, and points to the inevitable inference that the Great and Wise
9. As a means of enlightenment and as a reminder to every servant that turns to God.\textsuperscript{3862}

10. "And We send down from the sky water which is full of blessings, and We produce therewith gardens and grain harvests.

11. And tall palm-trees, with spathes piled one above the other.\textsuperscript{3863}

12. As a provision for Our servants; and We quicken thereby a dead land. Even so shall be the Resurrection.\textsuperscript{3864}

Designer, the Architect and the Controller, Who could bring into being this wonderful universe and who placed man at its centre, does possess the power to recreate the universe after its disintegration and to give man a new life after he is dead.

\textsuperscript{3862} Commentary:

It is logical to assume a purpose behind physical nature. The concept of God as Designer and Creator of all things gives a coherent and complete picture of origin, design and purpose. And the existence of a purpose behind the creation implies the existence of a life after death because the very idea that with the dissolution of its physical tabernacle the human soul suffers death militates against the whole design of God and the purpose in creating the universe.

\textsuperscript{3863} Important Words:

(tall) is the plural of \textit{باشق}, fem. gen. of \textit{باشق} which is act. part. from \textit{بشق}. They say \textit{بشق النخل}, i.e., the palm trees were or became tall or exceedingly tall and full grown or they bore fruit. \textit{بشق علىهم}, he overcame them, excelled them or was superior to them. \textit{بشق في علمه}, he excelled in his knowledge or learned the whole of it. \textit{بشق الشمس}, the sun rose high. \textit{بشق الأخلاق}, a person endowed with noble moral and mental qualities. \textit{بشق النخل}, an exceedingly tall palm tree or palm tree bearing fruit (Lane & Aqrab).

\textit{بشق} or \textit{بشق} (piled one above the other) is derived from \textit{بشق}. They say \textit{بشق}, he put goods one upon the other or set them together in regular order or piled them up. \textit{بشق الناس}, the teeth were set in regular order (Lane & Aqrab).

\textsuperscript{3864} Commentary:

The verse means that just as God sends down rain from heaven and causes a dry dead land to bloom and blossom and pulsate with a new vigorous life, and brings forth from the earth all sorts of flowers and fruits, similarly He can and will give a new life to man after he is dead so that he might account for and be rewarded or
13. "The people of Noah rejected the truth before them and so did the People of the Well and Thamūd.\(^{3865}\)

14. And 'Ad, and Pharaoh and the brethren of Lot.\(^{3866}\)

15. "And the Dwellers of the Wood, and the People of Tubba'. \(^{3867}\)

16. Have We then become weary with the first creation? Nay, but they are in confusion about the new creation.\(^{3868}\)

punished for the actions good or bad he might have done in this world.

3865. Commentary:

For the People of Noah see 11:26-49; for ṣaḥāb al-ral (Companions of the Well) 25:39, and for Thamūd 11:62—69.

3866. Commentary:

For 'Ad see 11:51—61.

3867. Commentary:

For ṣaḥāb al-rait (Dwellers of the Wood) see 15:79 and for the People of Tubba 44:38. The verse purports to say that the above-mentioned peoples were warned by their respective Prophets that if they rejected them, they would be punished in this world and would also have to account for their sins in the next. The first warning was literally fulfilled and, therefore, the second one is also bound to be fulfilled.

3868. Important Words:

عبينا (We have become weary) is derived from عَيْ (‘ayya). They say عَيِّ بَأَسُهُ أو عَن أَمْرِهِ (‘ayya). \(i.e.,\) he lacked power, strength or ability to perform or accomplish his affair; was unable to execute it through or found not the right way to do it. عَيِّ means, he was ignorant of the affair. أَعِيّ means, he was or became tired, fatigued or wearied عَيّ means, he found not the right way to express himself (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

In these verses "creation," besides its ordinary meaning, signifies spiritual awakening or revolution brought about by a Prophet among his people.
17. And assuredly, We have created man and We know what his mind whispers to him, and We are nearer to him than even his jugular vein.  

18. When the two Recording angels record everything, one sitting on his right and the other on his left.

19. He utters not a word but there is by him a guardian angel ready to record it.

20. "And the stupor of death certainly comes. 'This is what thou wast trying to run from.'"

3869. Commentary:

Wonderful is God's creation of the universe, but much more wonderful is the creation of man. The fact that man is master of his conduct and is responsible for his decisions is here put forward as another argument to support the inevitability of the Resurrection. In fact man's life on earth is "the seed-bed of an eternal future."

3870. Important Words:

(will record) is derived from لاتم. They say تلقى الشيء منه i.e., he received or got the thing; he learned it from him, hence preserved or recorded it (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

According to some Commentators the angel sitting on man's right records his good actions and that on his left, his bad actions; the words 'on the right' standing for his good actions and 'on the left' for his bad actions. Every deed or spoken word leaves its impress in the atmosphere and thus is preserved. Elsewhere in the Qur'an, it is stated that the limbs of man—his hands, feet and tongue—will bear witness against him on the Judgment Day. Thus different parts of a man's body may also be the recorders referred to in the present verse as the two Recording angels. See also 24:25; 36:66.

3871. Important Words:

(he utters) is aorist from لاتم. They say لنفظ، لنفظ البحر i.e., the sea cast it forth upon the shore, لنفظ فإن نفظ means, such a one died. لنفظ النقول أو بتقول means, he uttered or spoke the word (Lane & Aqrab).

(ready) is derived from عند. They say عند الشيء i.e., the thing was or became ready, at hand, prepared; it became great, big or bulky. عند عند means, ready, at hand, near; bulky, big or great (Lane & Aqrab).

3872. Important Words:

(thou wast trying to run from) is derived from حدث عنه أو منه. They say حدث i.e., he
21. "And the trumpet shall be blown: 'This is the Day of Promise.'

22. And every soul shall come forth and along with it there will be an angel to drive and an angel to bear witness. 3873

23. Then We shall say, 'Thou wast heedless of this; now We have removed from thee thy veil, and sharp is thy sight this day'. 3874

24. And his companion will say, 'This is what I have ready of his record.' 3875

turned aside or away from it; he removed or went away or went far away from it; he shunned or avoided it from fear or disdain. حاد عن الطريق means, he turned aside from the road (Lane & Aqrab).

3873. Commentary:

سائق (driver) may be the angel that sits on man’s left and records his bad deeds and as a punishment for them will drive him to Hell, and شهيد may be the angel that sits on his right and records his good actions and will bear witness in his favour. Or the two words metaphorically may stand for man’s misused limbs and faculties and those well and properly used. See also verse 18 above; 24: 25 and 36: 66.

3874. Important Words:

 بصير (eye) means, eye; the light whereby the organ of sight perceives the things; knowledge; discernment; intelligence (Lane & Aqrab).

حد (sharp) is derived from حد which means, he turned away or averted a person from a thing. حد شيء عن غيره means, he distinguished or separated by some mark a thing from another. حد السكين means, he sharpened the knife. حاد بصره إليه means, he looked sharply or attentively at him. رجل حاد means, a man sharp of intellect or understanding (Lane).

Commentary:

The verse means that in the next world the veil will be lifted from the eyes of man and his vision and mental perception will become clearer and sharper. He will see the consequences of his actions in an embodied form which were hidden from his eyes in this world and will realize that which he used to regard merely as an illusion, was a hard and stark reality.

3875. Commentary:

قرينة (his companion) may signify his evil companion, or the Satan, who has been called elsewhere in the Qur’an, man’s evil companion 4: 39; 43: 39, because it is at his instigation that man defies God’s commandments.
25. \textit{We shall say to his two Companions}, 'Cast ye twain into Hell every ungrateful enemy of truth.\

26. a'Hinderer of good, transgressor, doubter.

27. 'Who sets up another God besides Allah, so do ye twain cast him into the dreadful torment.'

28. b'His associate will say, 'O our Lord, it was not I that caused him to rebel; but he himself was too far gone in error.'

29. God will say, 'Quarrel not in My presence; I gave you the warning beforehand.'

30. 'The sentence passed by Me cannot be changed, and I am not in the least unjust to My servants.'

\underline{3876. Important Words:}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{عبيد (enemy)} is derived from \textit{عَبَد} which means, he went aside from it; he opposed and rejected what was true or just; he overstepped or transgressed the proper bound or limit; he acted immoderately or in rebellion. \textit{عبيد} is used here in all the senses of the root-word (Lane & Aqrab).

\item \textbf{Commentary:}

The dual form in \textit{عبيد} is used either because the command is given to the two angels—\textit{سائق} and the \textit{شهيد} — or in order to impart emphasis to the command. This form of expression is also used in 23:100 where a plural verb is used for the subject in the singular. The plural form \textit{عبدو} in that verse is used to lend emphasis to the disbelievers' desire to be sent back to this world, and represents the repetition of the singular form \textit{إرجعوني} (irj'ini).

\underline{3877. Commentary:}

It is human nature that when an evil-doer is confronted with the evil consequences of his deeds, he seeks to shift his responsibility to others. It is this state of mind of the disbeliever which is depicted in this verse. He will hold Satan responsible for his own transgressions and sins. See also 2:167-168.

\underline{3878. Commentary:}

God admonishes both the parties to stop wrangling and quarrelling and shifting the responsibility to one another as His sentence has already been pronounced and His Word never changes.
R. 3 31. On that day We will say to Hell, 'Art thou filled up?' and it will answer, 'Is there any more?'\textsuperscript{3879}

32. And Heaven will be brought near to the righteous, no longer remote.\textsuperscript{3880}

33. \textit{And it will be said, 'This is what was promised to you—to everyone who always turned to God and was watchful of his actions.}

34. 'Who feared the Gracious God in private and came to Him with a penitent heart.

35. \textsuperscript{b}Enter ye therein in peace. This is the Day of Eternity'.\textsuperscript{3881}

\textsuperscript{a}26 : 91; 81 : 14. \textsuperscript{b}14 : 24; 15 : 47; 36 : 59.

\textsuperscript{3879} Commentary:

The dialogue is metaphorical. Hell has been personified here and words are put in its mouth to express its state or condition and not that it will actually speak or, for that matter, it can speak. The word \textit{ti} has been used in this sense in 41 : 12 also where the heaven and the earth have been described as \textit{saying} that they obey Divine laws willingly. It is one of the peculiarities and beauties of the Arabic language that it uses words and expressions for inanimate things which are used for human beings. There is a famous Arabic proverb:

\textit{قال الجدار للوتد لم تشتني تالت سل من يدنتي
\textit{i.e., the wall said to the peg “why dost thou pierce me.” It said, “ask him who strikes me from behind.” Similarly, a famous Arab poet says:

\textit{بريد الرسح صدر أبي براء
ورعدل عن دماء بني عقيل
\textit{i.e., the spear intends to pierce the breast of Abû Barā‘, but it turns away from the blood of the sons of ‘Uqail. (Lane).}

The expression \textit{هل من زيد} in fact, points to man’s unlimited capacity for committing sins and his inordinate desire for worldly comforts which pave his way to Hell.

\textsuperscript{3880} Commentary:

If, as mentioned in the preceding verse, more and more sinners will be thrown into Hell for being purged and purified of their spiritual maladies, the present verse says, that Heaven will also be brought near for the righteous and the God-fearing.

\textsuperscript{3881} Commentary:

However dreadful its punishments may appear, Hell, according to the Qur’an, is a temporary penitentiary, while Heaven is an eternal abode; its blessings know no limit or end (11 : 109).
36. \textit{They will have therein whatever they desire, and with Us is a good deal more.}\textsuperscript{3882}

37. \textit{And how many a generation, who were greater than they in power, have We destroyed before them. They went about the lands devising means to escape the punishment. Was there any place of refuge for them?}\textsuperscript{3883}

38. \textit{Therein, verily, is a reminder for him who has a heart, or who gives ear, and is attentive.}\textsuperscript{3884}

39. \textit{And verily, We created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six periods and no weariness touched Us.}\textsuperscript{3885}

\textsuperscript{3882} Commentary:
The righteous will have in Paradise what they desire, to their hearts' content, but as man's desires at best are limited, they will be given much more than what they desire or deserve, much more than what they would even contemplate or conceive. They will see the beautiful face of God and will bask in the warmth of His countenance. This beautified vision in which the veil which divides man from Allah will be lifted and His Heavenly Glory disclosed to the soul, untrammelled by its earthly raiments is, according to some authorities, what is meant by the words \textit{وَلَا مَنْ مَزِيدُ}, i.e., and with Us is a good deal more.

\textsuperscript{3883} Important Words:
\textit{لَقَبَ} (went about) is the intensive form of \textit{لَقَبَ} (naqaba) which means, he made a hole through a wall; he perforated, pierced or made a hole through anything. \textit{لَقَبَ} in the \textit{الأرض} means, he went or went away through the land or country or journeyed or traversed through the land.

\textsuperscript{3884} Important Words:
\textit{قلْب} (heart) means, heart; the soul; the conscience; the mind, meaning the intellect; the endeavour to understand, and consideration. They say \textit{مَا لَكَ قَلْب} i.e., he has no intellect or intelligence; the purest or best or choicest part of a thing; \textit{قلب} \textit{الجَشَّ} means, the main body of the army; as distinguished from the van and the rear and the two wings. The word also signifies, a man genuine or pure in respect of origin or lineage, holding a middle place among his people (Lane & Aqrab).

\textsuperscript{3885} Important Words:
\textit{أَيَامٍ} (periods) is the plural of \textit{يَوْم} which properly means, time absolutely (1 : 4) or indefinite period or stage in the development of a thing. It does not always denote the day
40. So bear with patience what they say, and glorify thy Lord with His praise, before the rising of the sun and before its setting;

41. And in a part of the night also do thou glorify Him, and after prescribed prostrations.

42. And listen, on the day when the crier will cry from a place nearby, 3886

43. The day when they will hear the blast in truth; that will be the day of coming forth from the graves. 3887

as determined by the rising and setting of the sun. In the Qur'an يوم has been spoken of as equal to one or even fifty thousand years (22 : 48; 70 : 5). Elsewhere in the Qur'an the division of these six days has been described in this wise; the making of the earth took two days; it took two more days for mountains, rivers, etc., to be placed upon it, and another two days for the growth of vegetable and animal life on it. See also 10 : 4; 41 : 10—13.

لغوب (weariness) is infinitive noun from which means, he was fatigued, tired or wearied to the utmost; he was languid in consequence of fatigue; he was wearied in spirit or mind (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

It is characteristic of the Qur'an that not only does it exonerate God's noble Prophets from all the vices and immoralities imputed to them in the Bible, but it also clears the Divine Being of the flaws and defects that are inconsistent with His Majesty and Holiness. The Bible depicts God as "having rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made" (Gen. 2 : 2) but according to the Qur'an no weariness can touch Him.

3886. Commentary:

The "crier" may refer to the Holy Prophet. The context supports this, as the next few verses seem to refer to the spiritual resurrection brought about by the Holy Prophet among his people who at his call rose, as it were, from their graves, as the next verse implies.

The words "from a place nearby" may also signify that the call of the Holy Prophet will not remain a call in the wilderness, a distant cry. It will be listened to and accepted.

3887. Commentary:

"The blast" may also signify the stentorian call to truth of the Holy Prophet.
44. "Verily, it is We Who give life and cause death, and to Us is the final return.

45. On the day when the earth will cleave asunder in consequence of their misdeeds and they will come forth hastening—that will be a gathering quite easy for Us.

46. We know best what they say; and thou hast not been appointed to compel them in any way. So admonish, by means of the Qur'an, him who fears My warning. 3888

3888. Commentary:

The verse shows that the resurrection to which reference has been made in the preceding verse was to be brought about by the preaching and teaching of the Qur'an. The Surah had opened with the subject of the Final Resurrection, and the great eminence and glory which the Muslims were to achieve through the Qur'an was advanced as an argument in its support. God, Man, Creation and Resurrection are the four pillars on which the whole edifice of the Quranic teaching stands, and the present Surah derives its importance from the fact that it has dealt with these subjects in some detail.
CHAPTER 51

AL-DHĀRIYĀT

(Revealed before Hijra)

Title, Date of Revelation and Context

This is a Meccan Sūra. Like its predecessor it was revealed early in the Holy Prophet’s ministry. Its contents and style seem to support this view. Noldeke assigns its revelation to the fourth year of the Call. It derives its title from its first word—Al-Dhāriyāt. It has 61 verses.

The preceding Sūra had dealt with two resurrections—a spiritual resurrection which was to be brought about by the teaching of the Qur’ān, and the Final Resurrection in the life after death, the former resurrection being cited as an argument in support of the latter. In the present Sūra it is stated that a body of highly righteous men would come into existence through the influence of Quranic teachings on their lives. Like moisture-laden clouds which give rain to vast areas of parched and burnt land and make them blossom into new life, this holy band of righteous believers, having themselves awakened to a new spiritual life would carry the Quranic Message to the ends of the earth, sweeping all opposition before their onward march. The prediction, seemingly impossible of fulfilment at the time of revelation of the Sūra, would constitute, when turned into a palpable reality, a strong argument to establish the fact of the Great Resurrection in the after-life.

Subject-Matter

The Sūra says that whenever a Divine Messenger appears in the world to tell his people that there is a life beyond the grave in which they will have to account for their deeds they laugh him to scorn, and oppose and persecute him. But from among these very people there arise a company of good men who accept the Divine Message. The rejectors are punished and the believers receive God’s favours. The Sūra proceeds to cite the case of Patriarch Abraham who was visited by certain messengers who came to tell him that a dreadful fate awaited the people of Lot because of their iniquities and unnatural and highly immoral practices. Next, it briefly refers to the punishment that overtook Pharaoh, Ād, Thamūd and the people of Noah. Towards the end the Sūra draws pointed attention to the supreme object of man’s creation which is to cultivate and demonstrate in himself Divine attributes, and to discharge fully and faithfully his obligations to God and his fellow-beings.
1. In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. 3889
2. By those that scatter with a true scattering. 3890
3. Then carry the load. 3891
4. Then speed lightly along. 3892
5. And then distribute by command. 3893

3889. Commentary:
See 1:1.

3890. Important Words:
For the meanings of the particle وَأَوْ (by), and for the philosophy of the Quranic oaths see 37:2; 50:2 and 91:2.

الذُّارِياتً (those that scatter) is the plural of ذَرّةٍ ذَرَى which is act. part. from ذَرَى ذَرِئ. They say ذَرَى ذَرِئاً i.e., the thing flew in the air. ذَرَى ذَرِئاً means, the wind raised, carried away or dispersed the dust. الذُّارِياتِ means, the winds that raise or carry away or disperse, or the angels that cause the scattering away of the created things. ذَرَى ذَرِئاً which is infinitive noun is added to الذُّارِياتِ to add intensiveness to the meaning or to complete it (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:
For a collective note on this and the next three verses see v. 5 below.

3891. Important Words:
وقّر (load) is derived from وَقر which means,
(1) he was or became dull of hearing; (2) he or it was or became still or motionless; he rested; (3) he was or became grave, staid, steady, sedate or calm. They say وَقَرَت النَّخلة أو أَوْقَرَت i.e., the palm tree became laden or heavily laden with fruit. أَوْقَرَت الدِّين means, debt burdened him or burdened him heavily. وَقّرَ (waqrun) means, a load, a heavy load; a weight that is carried upon the back or head; a cloud laden with water. وَقّرَ (waqrun) means, a heaviness in the ear; or dullness of hearing; entire loss of hearing (Lane & Aqrab).

3892. Commentary:
See next verse.

3893. Commentary:
From a phenomenon in physical nature the four verses (2—5) draw attention to a parallel spiritual phenomenon. The parallelism is striking. The four words الذاَّرِياتِ (those that scatter), الذاَّرِياتِ (those that carry), الذاَّرِياتِ (those that speed lightly along) and الذاَّرِياتِ (those that distribute), when pointing to the physical phenomenon, may stand for winds that scatter far and wide the vapours that rise.
6. Surely, that which you are promised is true.\textsuperscript{3894}

7. And the Judgment will surely come to pass.

8. And by the heaven full of tracks.\textsuperscript{3895}

9. Truly, you are discordant in what you say.\textsuperscript{3896}

from the oceans, carry the clouds laden with rain-water, blow gently and then cause rain to fall on dry, parched and burnt land and turn it into a smiling, blooming and blossoming piece of earth, full of verdure, beautiful flowers and sweet fruits. These four words may also stand for the band of righteous men who drinking deep at the spiritual fountain that the Holy Prophet caused to flow; and after assimilating and becoming impregnated with the beautiful and life-giving Quranic teaching, went to the remote corners of Arabia and afterwards to far-off lands, carrying their blessed load, and scattering the revealed Word of God in countries, reeking with polytheistic beliefs and immoral practices—not with the sword but with love and peace, like winds that blow gently and carry rain to withered lands.

\textsuperscript{3894} \textbf{Commentary}:

The verse purports to say that the holy men of God referred to in the preceding four verses will discharge their sacred obligations fully and faithfully, and will thus fulfil prophecies concerning the spread and triumph of Islam. This fact will show that the promise about life after death and about the Resurrection was true.

\textsuperscript{3895} \textbf{Important Words}:

الحيد (tracks) is the plural of حيد (and حيد) which is derived from حيد. They say حيد, i.e., he tried it, and made it firm; he wore it firmly and well. حيد means, the track of the stars, the streak or track in the sky; the path or way. حيد السماء means, the tracks, paths, ways in the heaven. حيد means, the black thread with which are sewn the borders of a cloth; a streak or line; the ripples of sand. حيد السماء means, the ripples of water (Lane & Aqrab).

\textbf{Commentary}:

Tracks or paths of heaven (حيد السماء) are the orbits of planets, comets, and stars with which the vault of heaven is strewn. These celestial bodies float, in their respective orbits performing their allotted tasks regularly, punctually and unerringly, without trespassing on one another's sphere of action and all united forming a glorious harmony of structure and motion. That the heaven is full of such tracks on which planets and stars travel, was a discovery made to the world by the Qur'an at a time when it was believed that the heavens were solid in their formation. Does not this fact alone constitute an argument in support of the Qur'an being the revealed Word of God?

\textsuperscript{3896} \textbf{Commentary}:

The verse means to say that the great astronomical truth revealed in the preceding verse leads to the inference that the Qur'an is God's
10. He alone is turned away from the truth who is decreed to be turned away.  

11. Cursed be the liars.

12. Who are heedless of truth in the depth of ignorance.

13. They ask: ‘When will be the Day of Judgment?'

The verse may mean: (1) They ask, in derision or scoffingly, when the Day of Judgment will be? (2) Their behaviour, conduct or attitude shows that they do not believe in the Day of Judgment.
14. Say, 'It will be the day when they will be tormented at the Fire.'

15. 'Taste ye your torment. This is what you would hasten.'

16. But surely the righteous will be in the midst of gardens and springs.

17. Receiving what their Lord will bestow upon them; for they used to do good before that.

18. They used to sleep but a little of the night;

19. And at the dawn of the day they sought forgiveness;

20. And in their wealth was a share for one who asked for help and for one who could not.

3901. Commentary:

In the preceding verse the disbelievers were mentioned as asking mockingly, "When will be the Day of Judgment?" Here they are answered with a retort that "It will be the day when they will be burned in the fire."

3902. Commentary:

As against those who flounder in the welter of wrong beliefs and evil deeds and deny the possibility of the Day of Judgment, the righteous and the God-fearing will reside in heavenly gardens, full of springs and streams—the spiritual embodiments of the good deeds they had done in this life.

3903. Commentary:

Two different words have been used in the preceding and the present verse for the righteous believers—(God-fearing) and (those who do good). A is one who discharges his obligations faithfully and fully to God and man, and a is he who does more good to others than the good he receives from them and acts and behaves as though he is actually seeing God or, in a lesser degree, he is conscious of God watching over him. Thus a is a person of higher spiritual stature than a .

3904. Important Words:

(you used to sleep) is derived from which means, he slept or slept in the night. is sleeping at night and is sleeping in the day time, or remaining awake (Lane & Aqrab). See also 17:79 and 73:7.

3905. Commentary:

In the wealth of a rich Muslim, according to Islam, those who can express their needs also, as
21. And in the earth are Signs for those who have certainty of faith,

22. And also in your own selves. Will you not then see?

23. And in heaven is your sustenance, and also that which you are promised.

24. And by the Lord of the heaven and the earth, it is certainly the truth, even as you speak.

those who cannot, have a share, as of right. Thus a Muslim’s wealth is a trust to the benefit of which the poor are also entitled. Elsewhere the Qur’an says: “And give the relatives their rightful share in your property and to the poor and the needy” (17:26). So when a Muslim meets the needs of a poor brother, he does him no special favour but only discharges the obligation he owes to him and returns to him what was his due.

The word المعزوم (those who cannot express their needs) not only includes in its connotation those poor people who, from a sense of self-respect or a feeling of shame, are prevented from asking (2:274), but also dumb animals. The word, therefore, has been taken here as signifying a person who is debarred from earning his livelihood due to physical infirmity or some other similar cause.

رطع (sustenance) signifies both physical as well as spiritual sustenance.

The words “that which you are promised” may signify promises of triumph and prosperity to believers and warnings to disbelievers.

3906. Commentary:

Wonderful indeed is the creation of the universe. But much more wonderful is the creation of man, its centre and apex. There are signs in the creation of the physical universe and in that of man—the universe in miniature—to show that truth triumphs and prevails in the long run and falsehood suffers defeat and discomfiture.

3907. Commentary:

The verse means that the fact mentioned in the preceding verse is neither wishful thinking on the Holy Prophet’s part, nor is it a figment of his imagination, but is solid and hard truth as sure and true as “you speak.” Or the verse may mean that the Qur’an is as undoubtedly God’s own revealed Word as “you speak.”
25. Has the story of Abraham’s honoured guests reached thee?  
26. When they came to him and said, ‘Peace!’ he said, ‘Peace!’  
They were all strangers.

27. And he went quietly to his household, and brought a fatted calf,

28. And he placed it before them and said, ‘Will you not eat?’

29. And he conceived a fear of them. They said, ‘Fear not.’ And they gave him glad tidings of the birth of a son possessing knowledge.

3908. Commentary:
In the foregoing verses an implied reference was made to the great moral revolution that was to be brought about in the Arabian society through the selfless efforts of a band of holy men who were to carry the Message of Islam to the ends of the earth. The verse under comment and those that follow treat the same subject from a different angle. Here history is introduced and the examples of the Prophets Abraham, and Moses, and those of the people of Noah and of 'Ad and Thamud have been briefly mentioned.

There seems to exist some difference of opinion among Commentators of the Qur’an as to who these honoured guests were. Some hold them to be angels; others think that they were righteous men of the locality who had come to inform Abraham that the time of the punishment of Lot’s people had arrived, and to take Lot to a place of safety. The idea that they were angels might have arisen from the fact that they have been called “Our messengers” in the Qur’an (11:77), and also because when food was placed before them, they refused to partake of it. But nowhere in the Qur'an are these “messengers” described as angels of punishment; nor do angels ever walk on earth as Divine Messengers (17:96). The mere fact that they refused to partake of the food, can lend no support to the view that they were angels. There might be other reasons for the refusal.

3909. Commentary:
This and the preceding verse shed some light on the rules of hospitality.

3910. Important Words:
'وجس' (conceived) is derived from 'وجس' and means, he conceived, perceived or felt a thing in his mind. See also 20:68.

Commentary:
In the present verse as also in 15:54 “the promised son” has been described as “a son endowed with knowledge,” while in 37:102, he has been called “a forbearing son.” In the former verses the reference is to Isaac and in the latter to Ishmael.
30. Then his wife came forward extremely embarrassed, and smote her face and said, ‘A barren old woman!’

31. They said, ‘Even so has thy Lord said. Surely, He is the Wise, the All-Knowing.’

32. Abraham said, ‘Now what is your errand,’ O ye who have been sent?’

33. They said, ‘We have been sent to a sinful people.’

34. ‘That we may send down upon them stones of clay.

35. ‘Marked, with thy Lord, for those guilty of excesses.’

3911. Important Words:

- صرة (extreme embarrassment) is derived from صر which means, it made a sound or noise or a prolonged sound; he cried or raised a clamour with utmost vehemence. صرة means, vociferation or clamour or the most vehement clamour of crying; vehemence of grief, heat or anxiety; a contraction and moroseness of the face by reason of dislike or hatred or shame; a fit (Lane & Aqrab).

- صك (smote). صك means, he struck him or hit violently or he slapped him with his hand upon the back of his neck or upon his face. صك الباب means, he locked the door. صك وجه means, he slapped his face (Lane & Aqrab).

3912. Important Words:

- خطيب (your errand). خطيب means, a thing, an affair, or a business small or great; the cause or occasion of a thing or an event. They say ما خطيب i.e., what is the thing or affair or business that thou seest or desirest to do; or what is the cause of thy coming? (Lane & Aqrab). See also 12 : 52.

3913. Commentary:

The Divine punishment which seized the people of Lot is variously described in the Qur'an by the words حجرة i.e., storm of stones (54 : 35); حجرة i.e., a blast and حجرة من سجيل i.e., stones of clay (11 : 83). These people seemed to have been destroyed by a violent earthquake which turned parts of the earth upside down (11 : 83).
36. And We brought forth therefrom such of the believers as were there.

37. And We found not there except one house of those who were obedient to us.\(^{3914}\)

38. And We left therein a Sign\(^{b}\) for those who fear painful punishment.

39. \(^{a}\)And in the story of Moses also there were many Signs when We sent him to Pharaoh with clear authority.\(^{3915}\)

40. But he turned away from Moses on account of his power, and said, 'A sorcerer, or a madman.'\(^{3916}\)

41. \(^{a}\)So We seized him and his hosts and threw them into the sea; and he himself was to blame.

\(^{a15}:60; 29:33. \(^{b}15:76; 29:36. \(^{e}11:97; 23:46-47; 40:24. \(^{d}10:91; 28:41; 79:26.\)

---

3914. Commentary:

The house referred to in the verse was that of Lot minus his wife, who chose to side with her disbelieving relatives and refused to go with Lot.

3915. Commentary:

For the story of Moses, the Divine Message he gave to Pharaoh, for his mission of the deliverance of Israelites from a most debasing and disgraceful bondage and for the causes that led to the undoing and destruction of Pharaoh and his mighty hosts see 7:104-156; 10:76-93; 20:10-55; 26:11-69 & 28:4-45.

3916. Important Words:

\(^{a}\)रकन (power) is derived from \(^{rakana or rakina)\). They say रकन अले, i.e., he inclined towards him or it; he trusted or relied upon him or it so as to be or become easy or quiet in mind; he was or became firm, still, grave, staid, sedate or calm. रकन (ruknum) means, side or outward part of a thing; a stay or support; power, might and resistance; a man’s kinsfolk or clan, his people or party; persons by whom he is aided and strengthened; a noble or high person. They say हौरकन मन आरकन गुमे, i.e., he is an important person among the great men of his people. The word also means, an affair of great importance; a formidable event; the essence of a thing whereby it subsists. आरकन इत्यत means, the fundamentals of Prayer without which it is incomplete (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradát).
42. And there was a Sign in the story of the tribe of 'Ad, when We sent against them the destructive wind.\(^{3917}\)

43. It spared nothing whatever that it came upon but made it like a rotten bone.

44. And a Sign there was in the story of the tribe of Thamûd when it was said to them, 'Enjoy yourselves for a while.'\(^{3918}\)

45. But they rebelled against the command of their Lord. So the thunderbolt overtook them while they gazed\(^d\);

46. And they were not able to rise up again, nor could they defend themselves.\(^{3919}\)

47. And We destroyed the people of Noah before them; they were a disobedient people.\(^{3920}\)

48. And We have built the heaven with Our own hands, and verily We have vast powers.\(^{3921}\)

---

\(^{a46 : 25.}\)  
\(^{b46 : 26.}\)  
\(^{c11 : 66.}\)  
\(^{d11 : 68.}\)
49. "And the earth We have spread out, and how excellently We lay it out!"

50. And of everything have We created pairs,\(^b\) that you may reflect.\(^{3922}\)

51. Flee ye therefore unto Allah. Surely, I am a plain Warner unto you from Him.\(^{3923}\)

52. And do not set up another god along with Allah.\(^a\) Surely, I am a plain Warner unto you from Him.\(^{3924}\)

53. Even so there came no Messenger to those before them, but they said, 'A sorcerer, or a madman!'

---

**Commentary**:

The verse makes pointed reference to God’s marvellous handiwork—the universe, creation of which leads directly to the object of the creation of man, who is the aim and object of its creation and its acme and apex. In the creation of the heavens and the earth there is proof of many Divine attributes, the prominent being His Glory, Might and Majesty.

---

**3922. Commentary**:

The verse implies a subtle allusion to the object of man’s creation, one of the main themes of the \textit{Sūra}. The verse, like several other Quranic verses states that God has created all things in pairs. There are pairs not only in animal life, but also in vegetables, and even in inanimate things. There are pairs also in spiritual things. Even heaven and earth make a pair. Unless water comes from heaven and the sun gives warmth and light to the earth there can be no vegetation. Similarly, the human soul, which has been compared to earth in the foregoing verses, can find no scope for the manifestation of its latent and inherent powers and attributes unless the light of revelation descends upon it.

---

**3923. Commentary**:

The verse purports to say that if believers really wish to establish real and permanent connection with God, the best way to achieve it is to seek His help and protection and guidance. In this lies the quintessence of the Message which all Divine Prophets have given to the world.

---

**3924. Commentary**:

True and unadulterated belief in God’s Oneness and Unity is the pivotal and primal fact of all religions.
54. Have they bequeathed this attitude as a legacy to one another? Nay, they are all a rebellious people. 

55. So turn away from them; and there will be no blame on thee.

56. And keep on exhorting; for verily, exhortation benefits those who would believe.

57. And I have not created the Jinn and the men but that they may worship Me.

---

Commentary:

So strikingly similar are the charges leveled against Divine Reformers by their opponents in all ages that it seems they bequeathed it as a legacy to their successors to go on repeating those accusations.

Important Words:

- يعبدون (they may worship Me) is derived from 'abada. يعبد means, he served, worshipped or adored God alone or he rendered to God humble obedience. يعبد (aboda) means, he was or became a slave, his forefathers having been so before him. يعبد به (abbada) means, he clave to it or him. يعبد (abbada) means, he enslaved him; he subdued him so that he did the work of slaves. يعبد الطريق means, he trod the road so as to make it even or easy to walk or ride upon. يعبد الابير means, he subdued or rendered the camel submissive (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradât).

Commentary:

The primary signification of the word عبادة (Iba'adat) as shown under Important Words above, is to subject oneself to a rigorous spiritual discipline, working with all one’s inherent powers and capacities to their fullest scope, in perfect harmony with and in obedience to God's design, so as to receive the Divine impress and thus be able to manifest in oneself God’s attributes. This is, as stated in the present verse, the great and noble aim and object of man's creation and this is exactly what worship of God means. The external and internal endowments of human nature give us clearly to understand that of God-given faculties the highest is the one which awakens in man the urge to search after God and incites in him the noble desire completely to submit himself to His will. This being the great object of man’s existence the Qur'an has not failed to prescribe ways and means to attain it.

The first means towards the attainment of this end is right knowledge and firm faith in a Living God and the recognition and realization of His beauty and goodness, because beauty and goodness are the two incentives to love (1:2-4 & 14:35).

Another important means to realize this noble end is prayer. Repeated stress has been laid upon prayer in the Qur'an because man can reach God only with Divine help and assistance (40:61).

Without mujahadah it is idle even to conceive of attaining this end. Mujahadah consists in seeking God by spending one's money and time and applying one's faculties, and
58. I desire no sustenance from them, nor do I desire that they should feed Me.\footnote{3927}

59. Surely, it is Allah Himself Who is the Great Sustainer, the Lord of Power, the Strong.

60. So the fate of those who do wrong shall surely be like the fate of their fellows of old; so let them not ask Me to hasten on the punishment.\footnote{3928}

\footnote{3927} Commentary:
The verse purports to say that if the spiritual way-farer pursues his course towards the noble object of his life steadfastly and with perseverance, he does no good to God, or to anybody else, but himself profits from it and attains the object of his quest. It is in a life led in obedience to, and harmony with, Divine laws that lie his spiritual development and the attainment of everlasting and eternal life.

\footnote{3928} Important Words:
\(ذَنْب\) (lot) is derived from \(ذَنْب\). They say \(ذَنْب\) \textit{i.e.,} he followed his tail, not quitting his
61. *Woe, then, to those who disbelieve, because of that day of theirs which they have been promised.*

Commentary:

The verse warns disbelievers that if they persisted in their evil course, they will meet with a fate similar to that of the opponents of former Prophets. Like them they will come to a sad end.
CHAPTER 52

AL-ŢÛR

(Revealed before Hijra)

Title, Date of Revelation, and Context

This Ṣūra, like its two predecessors, was revealed at Mecca in the early period of the Call. Noldeke places it after Chapter 51, while according to Muir it was revealed somewhat later. The contents of the Ṣūra show that it was revealed at a time when opposition to Islam had become severe and persistent, and even plots had begun to be hatched against the life of the Holy Prophet. The Ṣūra has 50 verses and takes its title from its second verse.

In the preceding Ṣūra attention was drawn to the great spiritual revolution which was to be brought about by the Qur’ān. It was in the fitness of things and quite in accordance with the laws of nature (the Ṣūra stated) that because men had become corrupt and had forsaken God, a new Revelation should have come, like rain that descends upon dry land at the proper time and quickens it into a new life. The Ṣūra had ended on the note that like former Prophets the Holy Prophet will meet with severe opposition, but the cause of Truth will triumph and disbelievers will be punished. The present Ṣūra refers also to the Biblical prophecies about the Holy Prophet and warns disbelievers that if they persisted in their opposition they will be seized with Divine punishment.

Summary

The Ṣūra opens with a direct and emphatic reference to the prophecies about the Qur’ān and the Holy Prophet in the Bible, and states that the Bible, the Qur’ān and the Ka‘ba all bear evidence to the truth of Islam and the Holy Prophet, and proceeds to warn disbelievers that opposition to truth is never productive of good results and that their power would be broken and disgrace and humiliation would be their lot. But those righteous servants of God who accept the Divine Teaching and mould their lives in accordance with it would receive Divine favours. Not only they but also those of their children who followed in their footsteps and led righteous lives would be made to join with them in the Abode of Eternity.

Next, the Ṣūra says that the Holy Prophet is neither a soothsayer, nor a madman or a poet but a true Messenger of God, because the great moral and spiritual revolution brought about by him could not be the work of a madman or a poet; nor could the great Divine Book—the Qur’ān—that has been revealed to him, be the work of a forger of lies or a fabricator. The Qur’ān has been revealed by the Great Creator of the heavens and the earth. The Prophet seeks no reward from them nor would their plans against him succeed because he is under God’s protection. On the contrary, Divine punishment would overtake disbelievers and the time of their chastisement is fast approaching.
1. In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. 3929

2. By the Mount; 3930

3. And by the Book inscribed; 3931

4. On parchment unfolded; 3932

5. And by the Frequented House; 3933

Commentary:

The words “parchment unfolded,” qualify the expression, “the Book inscribed,” which stands for the Qur'an or the Book of Moses.

Important Words:

ْالْحَقْرَةُ (Frequented) is derived from حَقَّرَة. They say حَقَّرَة البَكْرَة i.e. he stayed in the house or he occupied, tenanted or inhabited it. حَقَّرَة البَكْرَة means, he kept the building in a good state. حَقَّرَة البَكْرَة means, he visited the place. حَقَّرَة البَكْرَة دار مَعْمَر means, an inhabited or a visited or frequented house. حَقَّرَة البَكْرَة means, he worshipped his Creator (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The words “the Frequented House,” may refer to the Tabernacle that Moses had constructed in the wilderness where the Israelites worshipped, or to the Temple at Jerusalem, or to any sacred house of worship. But preferably it refers to the Ka'ba which is described in the Qur'an also as “a Resort” (2:126); “the Sacred House” (5:3); “the Sacred Mosque” (17:2); “the Ancient House” (22:30); and “the Town of Security” (95:4); etc.
6. And by the Elevated Roof;\(^{3934}\)

7. And by the Swollen Sea\(^{3935}\)

---

3934. **Commentary:**

'The Elevated Roof' may also refer to the Tabernacle which Moses set up in the wilderness in the form of a canopy under which the Israelites worshipped. Or it may refer to the Ka'ba or to the sky or heaven, the last reference being more appropriate and relevant.

3935. **Important Words:**

\(\text{سجر} \) (swollen) is derived from \(\text{سجر} \text{النهر} \), \(\text{i.e.,} \) the water filled the stream. \(\text{سجر} \text{النور} \) (\(\text{sajjara} \)) means, he filled the oven with firewood and heated it. \(\text{سجر} \text{الناء} \) means, he made the water to flow forth whithersoever it would. \(\text{سجري} \) means, filled; kindled; still or quiet, or still and full at the same time; empty (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

It is characteristic of the Qur'an that when it has to make a firm declaration and impart emphasis and certainty to that declaration it swears by, or cites as witnesses, certain beings or objects or natural laws or phenomena. In the first few verses the \(\text{Sûra} \) swears by certain things intimately connected with Moses—the counterpart of the Holy Prophet. It was on the \(\text{Tûr} \) that the revelation was vouchsafed to Moses which embodied his Law and the prophecies which spoke about the appearance of a great Divine Prophet from among the brethren of the Israelites. That Prophet was to be the like of Moses and was to shine forth from mount Paran and to come with ten thousand saints, holding in his right hand a fiery law (Deut. 18:18 & 33:2). Evidently, the Holy Prophet was the Divine Messenger spoken of in the prophecy. His advent is likened in the Qur'an to the advent of Moses (73:16). He shined forth from mount Paran, holding the Qur'an in his right hand and entered Mecca at the head of ten thousand saintly warriors. The \(\text{Sûra} \) then cites, as evidence, the 'Inscribed Book' which is the Bible or the Qur'an, preferably the latter, and which stands as a standing and incontrovertible testimony to the truth of the claims of the Holy Prophet. "The Frequented House"—the Ka'ba,—more than anything else, shows that the religion of which it forms the citadel and the centre is God's final Dispensation. The site where the Ka'ba stands was a dry barren waste where no sign of human or animal life was visible. Here, long centuries ago, a holy man of God—the Patriarch Abraham, aided and assisted by his son, Ishmael, while raising its foundations, had prayed that the place may become a haven of safety and security and may constitute the centre from where God's Unity and Oneness may be proclaimed and preached. It was "this barren waste that didst not bear and didst not travail with child" which gave birth to the Greatest Son of man, as was spoken of old (Isa. 54:1). Here it was (as was foretold) that "the glory of God rose and shone; the multitudes of camels came, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah, all came from Sheba and brought gold and incense and shewed forth the praises of the Lord" (Isa. 60:1-6).

The reference in the words "'the Elevated Roof,'" being to heaven, the verse (v. 6) signifies